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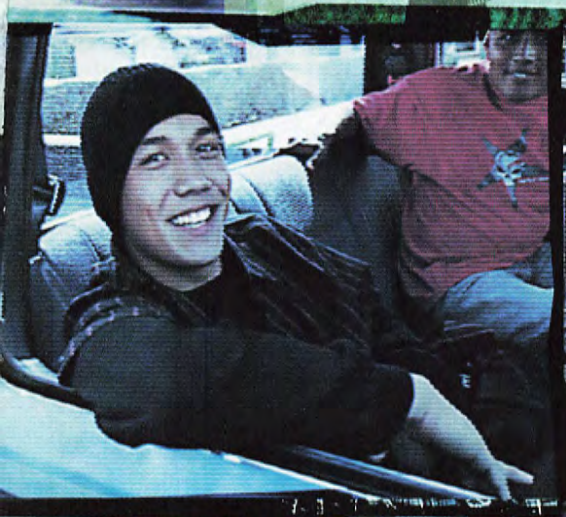

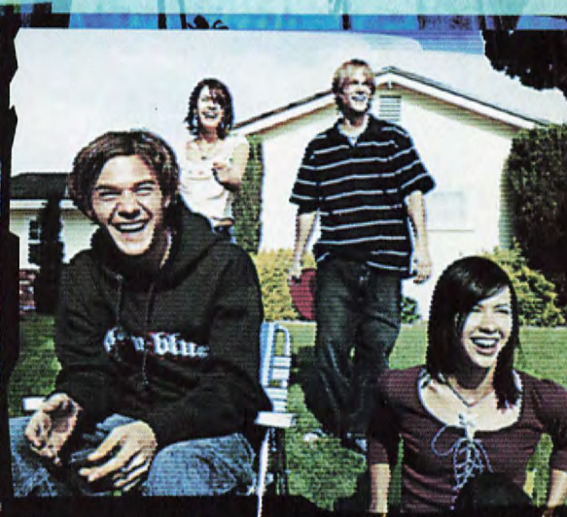

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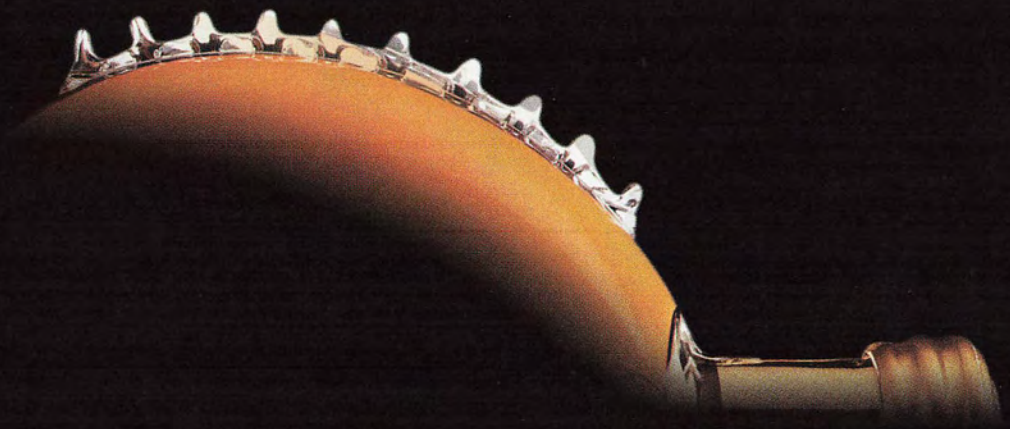

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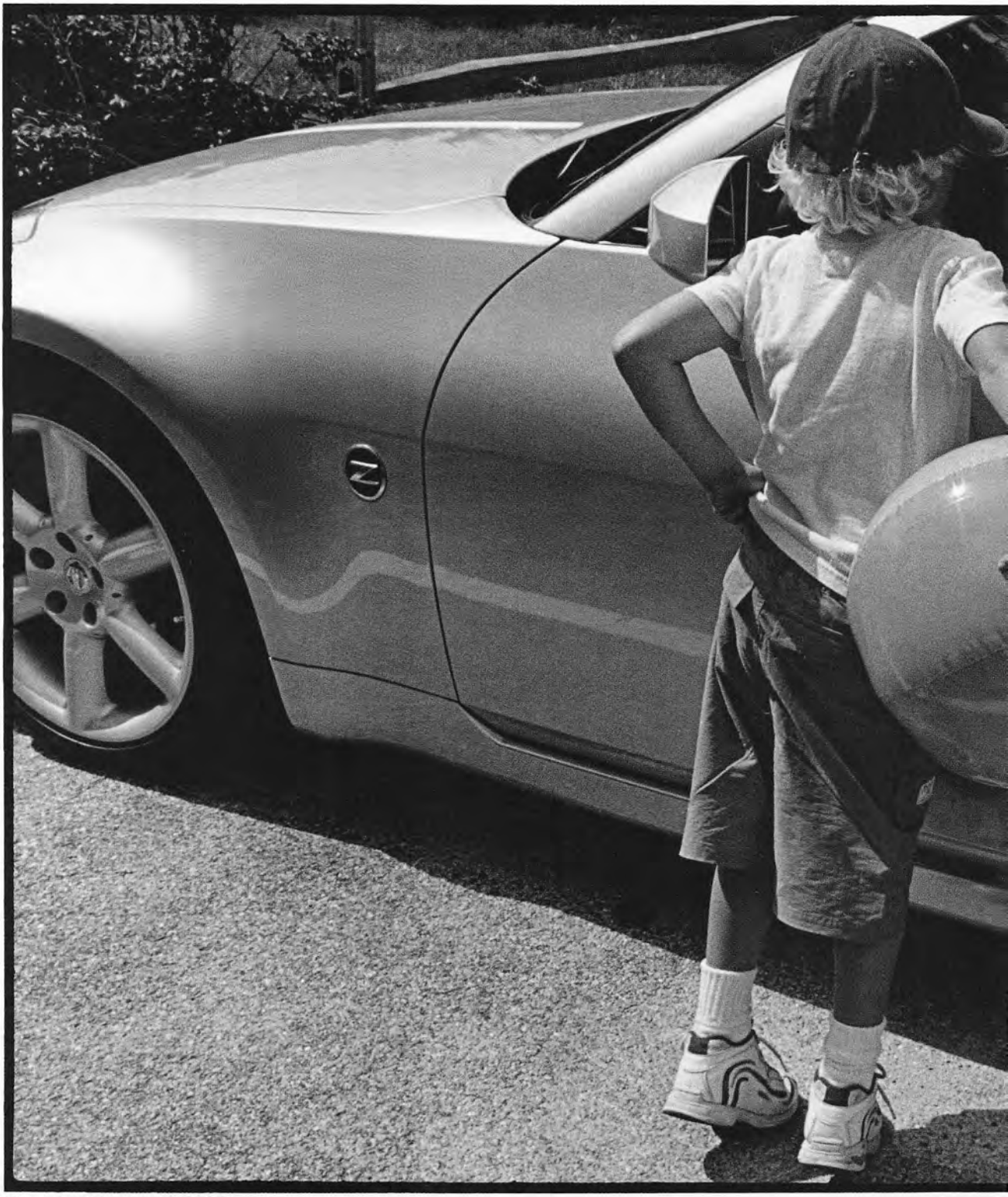

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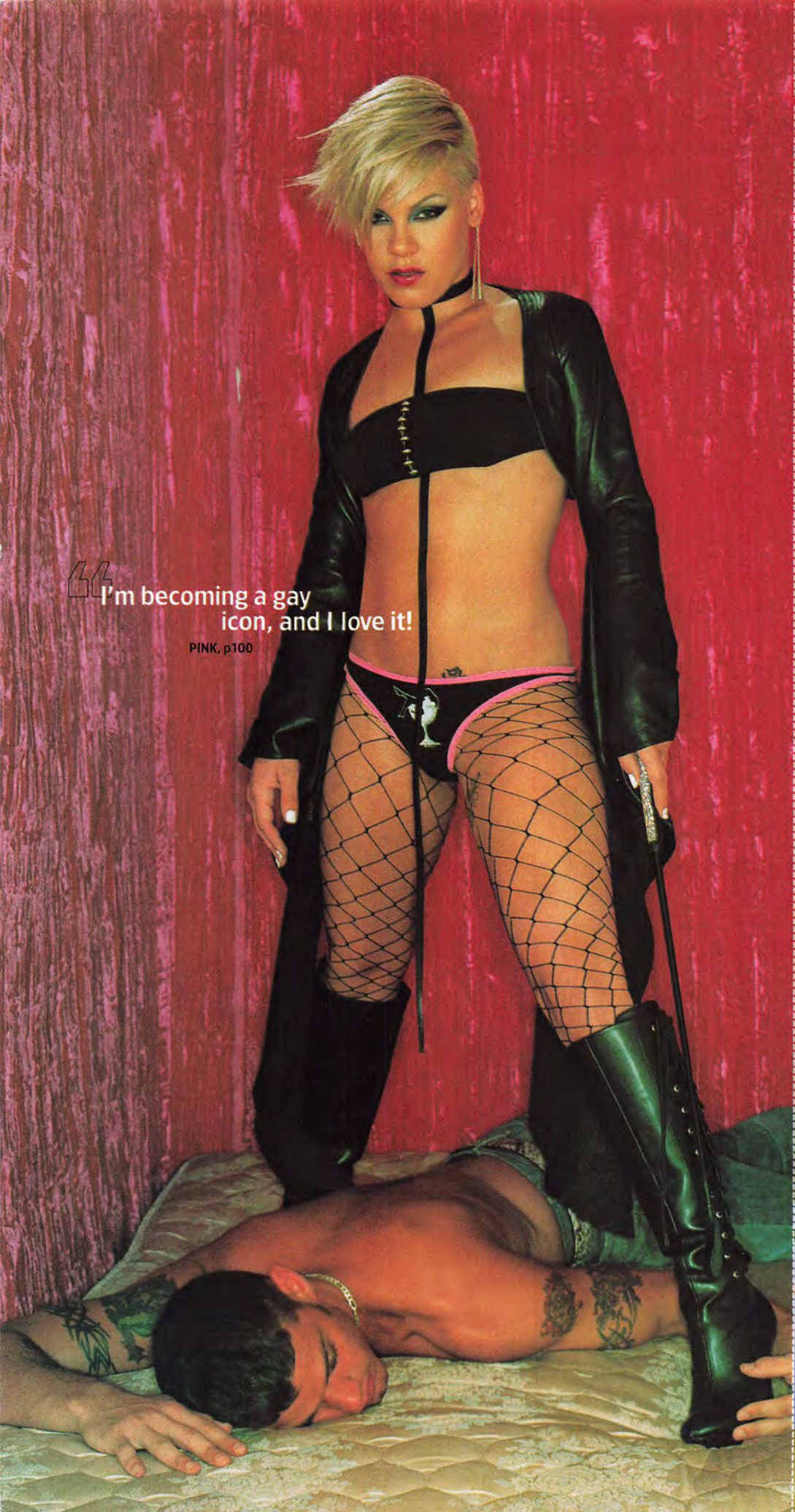

"I'm becoming a gay icon, and I love it!"

PINK, p100

BLENDER

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Beck takes his breakup pain public on his gorgeous CD *Sea Change*. Did he write it after the split? "Er, a little before — after, but before." *Uh-huh.*

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100 **PINK**
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ON THE COVER >>>>>

PHOTOGRAPHY
FRANK OCKENFELS 3

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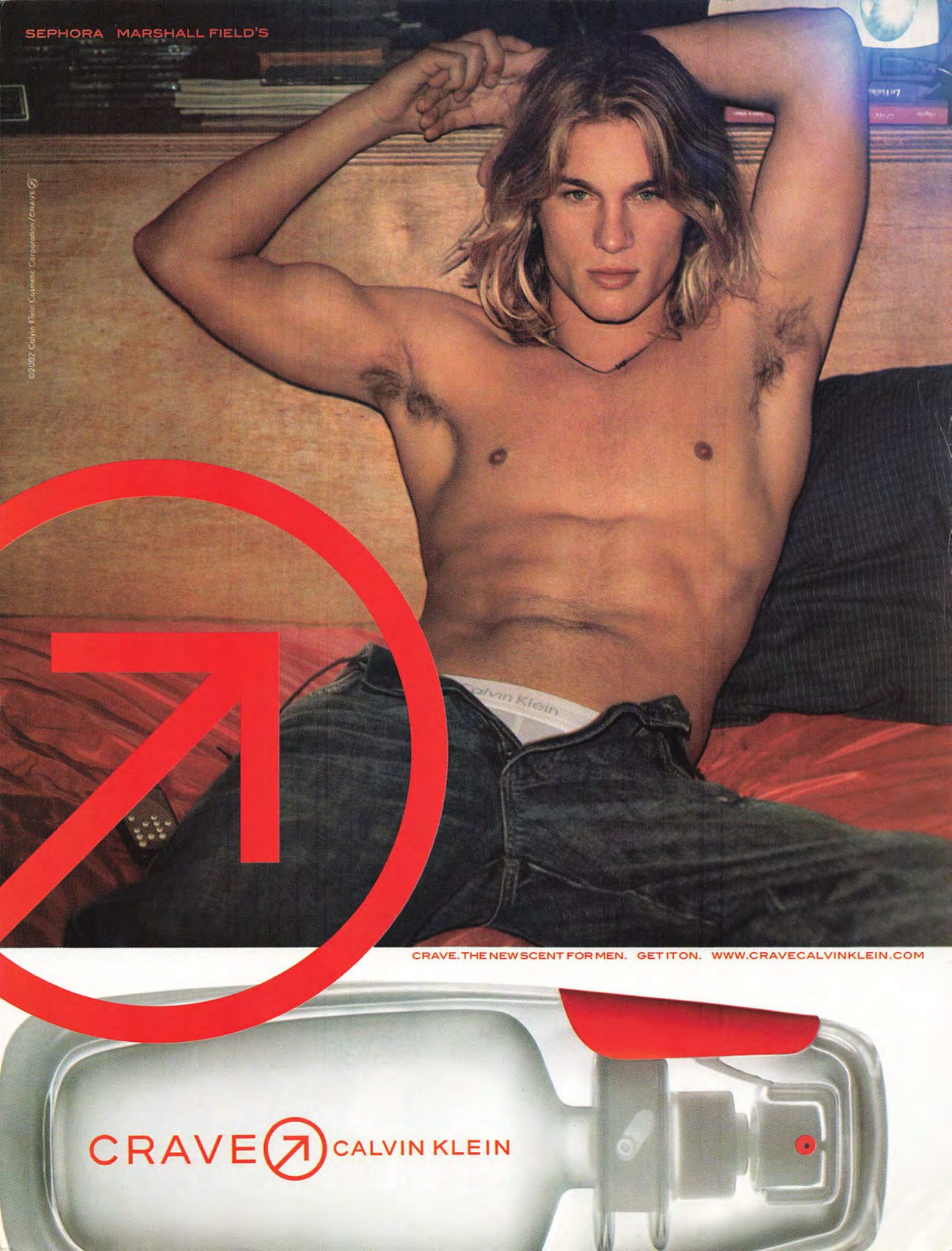
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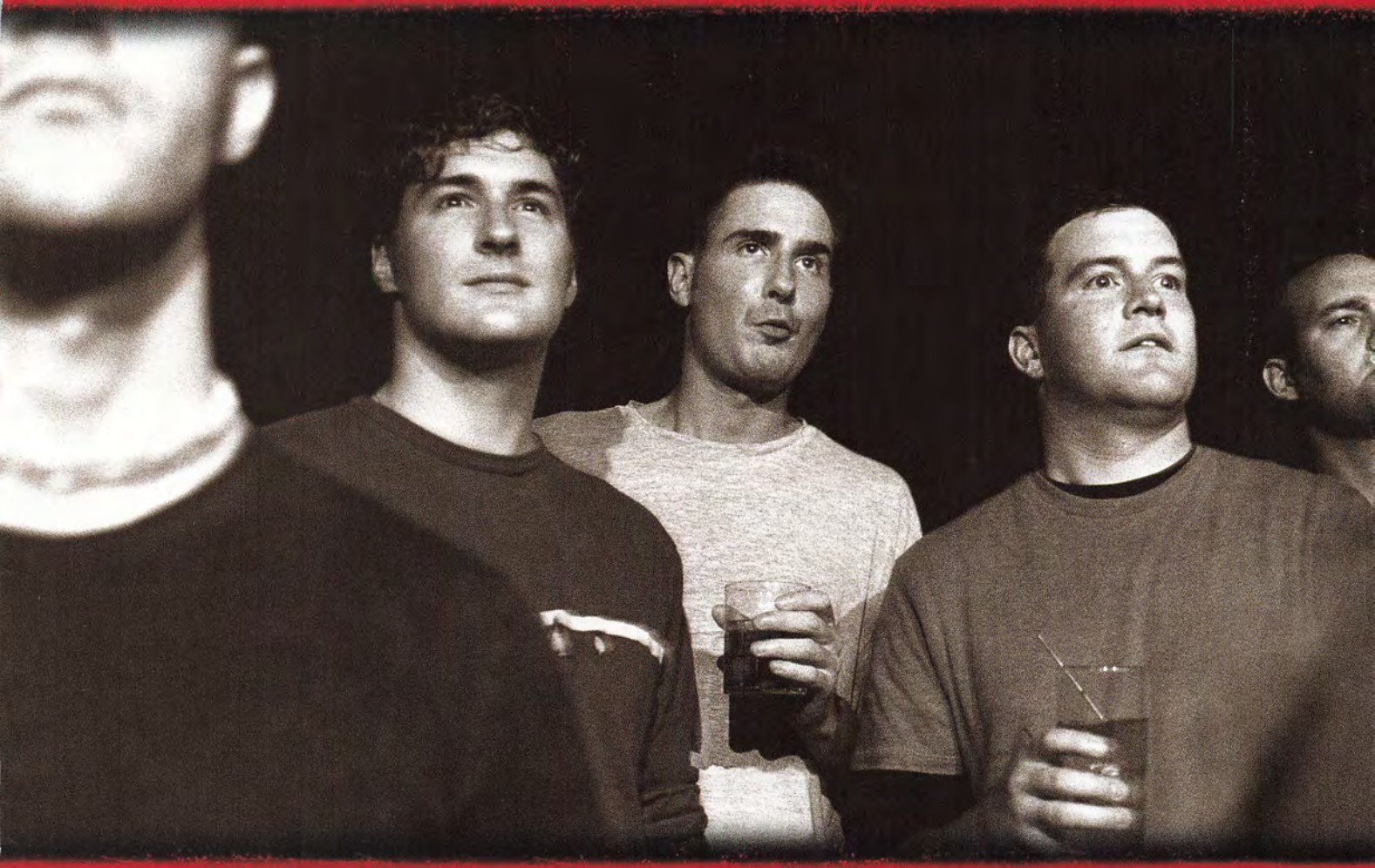
"There's got to be a reason why I was chosen to be Elvis Presley." p76

YOU CAN TALK TO THEM ABOUT ANYTHING.



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"I like being in peril. BECK, p58

Peggy Sirota

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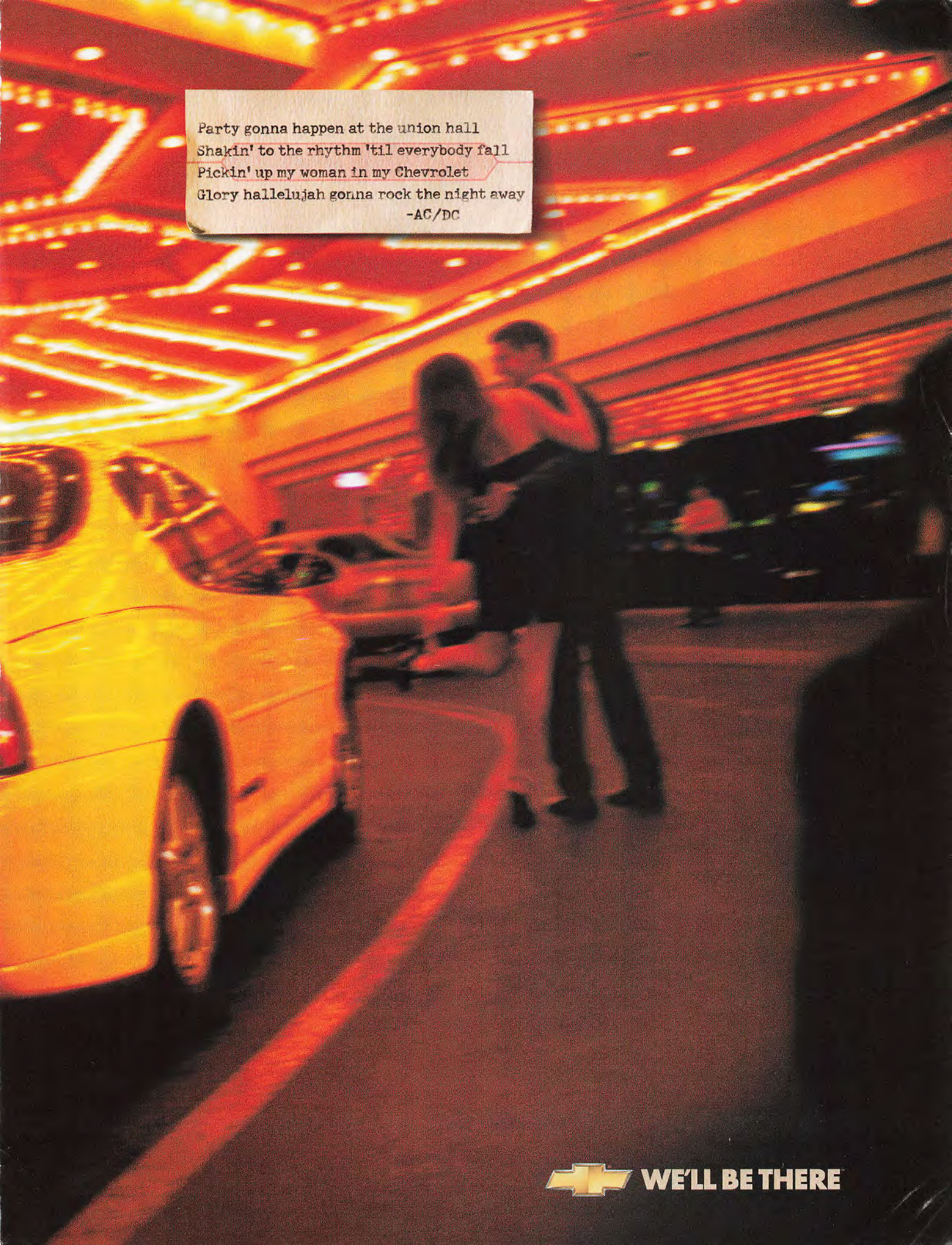

Party gonna happen at the union hall
Shakin' to the rhythm 'til everybody fall
Pickin' up my woman in my Chevrolet
Glory hallelujah gonna rock the night away
-AC/DC
WE'LL BE THERE

Eve, p82 →

AC/DC's Angus Young, p146 →

Marianne Faithfull, p162 →

WE CANNOT BE BRIBED!

ONCE IN A WHILE, the attention of life-of-luxury-living, star-befriending, luncheon-attending, white wine–guzzling, canapé-noshing, editor-in-chiefing fat cats like me is diverted by publicists hoping to curry favor with what we in the business like to call "promotional items." These range from the useless, like the 18-inch cardboard cutout of the gorgeous Kylie Minogue that stands on my desk, to the completely useless. (Anyone out there want a *National Lampoon's Van Wilder* fake dog scrotum?) Of course, these little enticements have never had any bearing on what we like to call "editorial decisions."

Until three weeks ago, that is, when the up-and-coming rockers OK Go sent us a miniature ping-pong table. Talk about disruptive! All computers have been switched off, all phones left off the hook, as *Blender* editors have launched a marathon ping-pong round robin. Nostrils flare in excitement. Eyes bulge. Teeth are bared. Sweat dapples the brow. It's all a bit like a Fleetwood Mac recording session from 1977.

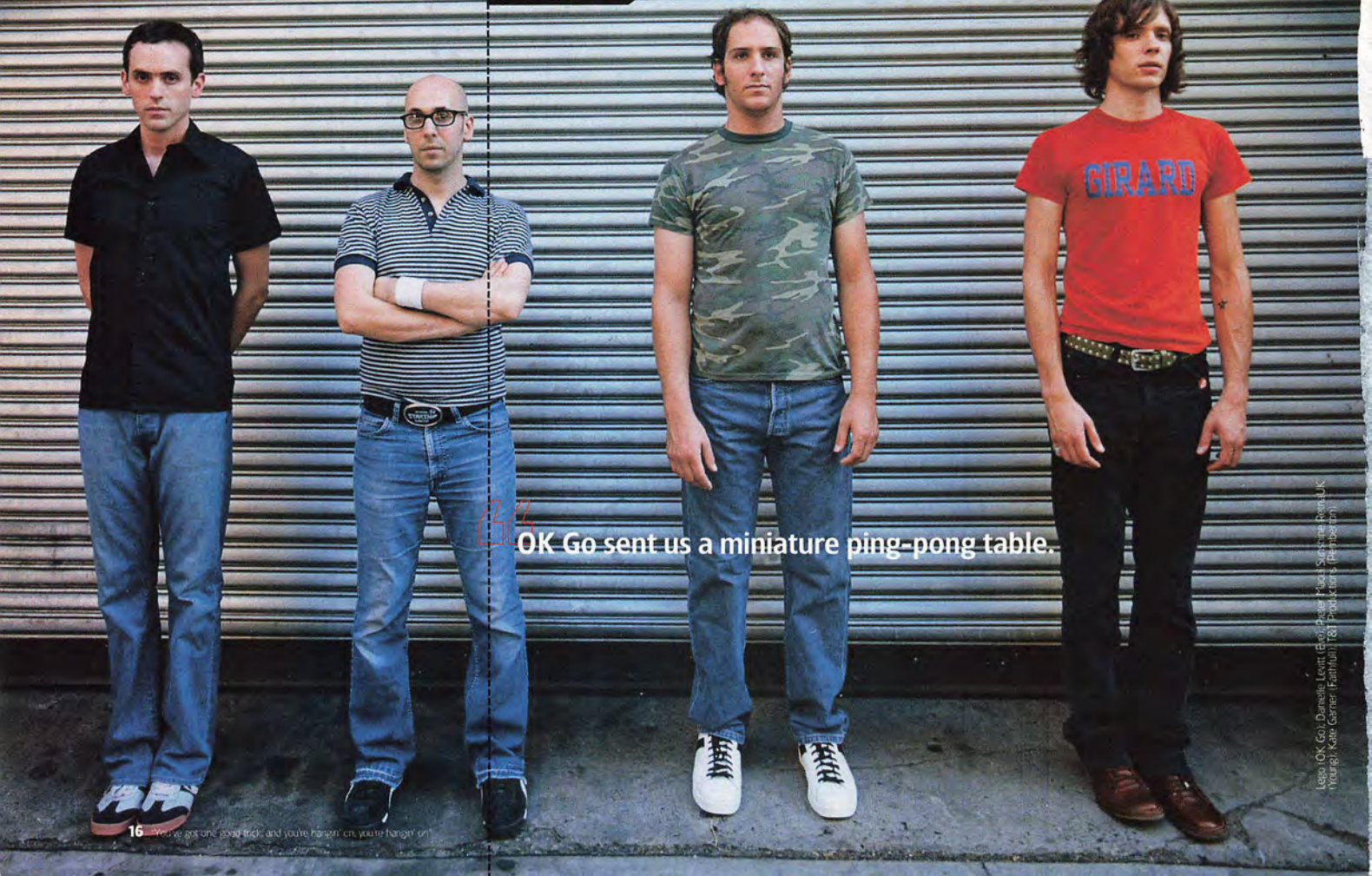
Attentive readers will notice, coincidentally, a piece about OK Go on page 34. *There is no relation between this article and the band's completely awesome ping-pong table.*

Indeed, only the most suspicious would suggest any connection between the stars featured in this issue and the great gifts they sent — be they Pink (thanks for our new pocket calculator, Pink!), Beck (hey, cool tote bag!), Eve (baseball cap!), Jennifer Love Hewitt (socks!), Elvis Presley (bath gel!), AC/DC (shoelaces!), Rock's 25 Most Dastardly Villains (cheddar-popcorn tin!), Scott Stapp (CREED ON BOARD sign!), Marianne Faithfull (glow-in-the-dark silverware!) or Guy Ritchie (glow-in-the-dark, cheddar-flavored tote bag!).

We received items from other, lesser pop stars, of course. And we wish these stars the best of luck in breaking into our November issue.

Enjoy!

ANDY PEMBERTON
EDITOR IN CHIEF



"OK Go sent us a miniature ping-pong table.

Lappe (OK Go), Danielle Levitt (Fab), Zaster Model Supreme Rena (UK Young), Kate Garner (Faithfull) T&T Productions (Pemberton)

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You've Got Mail!

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★ To find out who sang the lyrics printed at the bottom of the pages, check out our Web site at blender.com.

DEAR BLENDER

The upside-down lyric on the last page of your latest issue ("T-shirts, cutoffs and a pair of thongs/We've been having fun all summer long") is from the Beach Boys' "All Summer Long." But why did you choose that lyric for your September issue?

JENNA BREWSTER, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Because we featured the Beach Boys in September's "Boy-Band Babylon!" article. Also, we love seeing the word *thongs* in print. But good point, Jenna.

DEAR BLENDER

Keith Richards doesn't use a cell phone because it gets hot, and he claims you might as well stick your head in a microwave as talk on a cell ["33 Things You Should Know About Keith Richards," September]? Yeah, Keith. It's far healthier to spend your life smoking and shooting up. (He's right about cheese, though. That shit's plain evil.)

DAMON WEBSTER, HOUSTON

DEAR BLENDER

In the first sentence of your recent piece about Nelly ["Off the Wall," August], you say he's 24, but you later say he was born in 1980. It doesn't add up. How old is he?

DOUG FULLER, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

We apologize for the error. Nelly is indeed 24. He was born in 1977 and will be 25 on November 2. You can have one (and only one) free punch to the shoulder.

LISTEN UP!

"GET IT DOWN, you'll feel better, send it now, write away," sang Sir Paul McCartney — and how right he was! Tell us your thoughts, opinions, likes, dislikes, favorite artist, favorite song, anything and everything. If we print your letter in our next issue, you'll win a brand-new, state-of-the-art, fatty-boom-batty MP3 player similar to the one that's pictured to the left. *All right! Get your pen on!*

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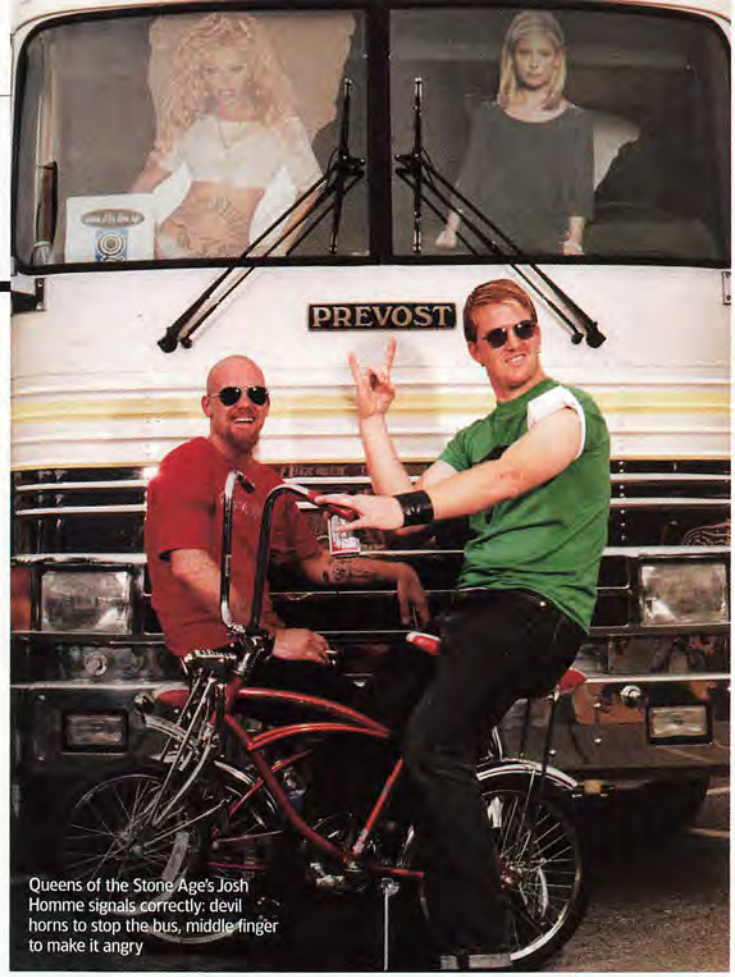

Queens of the Stone Age's Josh Homme signals correctly: devil horns to stop the bus, middle finger to make it angry

DEAR BLENDER

Blender is a high-quality mag featuring a vast array of musicians and musical styles. But how it's built is also high-quality. I am a quadriplegic and have very little use of my hands. I tend to drop magazines, and I'm rough on them. I've subscribed to *Blender* since your first issue, and must report that while *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* fall apart after a day because they're cheaply made, every issue of *Blender* looks like it just arrived in the mail that day.

LARRY SINGER, IRVINE, CALIFORNIA

You should check out *Cat Fancy*, Larry. That's built like a tank!

DEAR BLENDER

Josh Homme from Queens of the Stone Age claims he would willingly "shit hot knives to hang out with Kylie Minogue for 40 minutes" ["How to Survive Five Days on the Road With Queens of the Stone Age," September]. I have to say I'd do worse than that to see Josh Homme shit hot knives.

DENNIS ANDERSON
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

DEAR BLENDER

Your characterization of "Generation Whine" in your piece about divorce and rock ["Why Are America's Rock Bands So Goddamned Angry?", August] was right on target. I can hardly listen to the radio anymore without some whiny musicians violating my ears with some sob story about their lives.

WHITNEY HANNAH, HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

We feel exactly the same way. But then, that's because we never got enough love from our mommies.

DEAR BLENDER

Mandy Moore is friends with the Osbourne kids ["Sexy. Young. Talented," September]? You've got to be kidding! Here's my theory about this "friendship": Mandy wants to be a bad girl. She's looking to change her rep. Who better to teach her the dark side than the Osbourne family? As Ozzy's classic song "Mama I'm Comin Home" goes: "Times have changed/And times are strange/Here I come but I ain't the same."

ERIC IDEMOTO, MAUI, HAWAII

What the hell are you talking about, Eric?

Mandy Moore's chiropractor could do only so much.

DEAR BLENDER

Mandy Moore is *sooooo* hot. How'd you get her to be all sexy, since she prides herself on being a pure, innocent Christian girl? You guys are my heroes; *Blender* is my god.

JARED STRAUSS, MINNEAPOLIS

Clockwise from top right: Pat Pope/RetnaUK; Frank Ockenfels 3; David Weiss (MP3)

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DEAR BLENDER

Thank you for your obituary of Alice in Chains' Layne Staley ["We Left Him Alone," August]. It brought tears to my eyes. Staley was the true grunge god! Once again — thank you.

JAMIE M. STEWART, HILLSBORO, OREGON

DEAR BLENDER

Your 50 Greatest Musical Moments in Movie History [September] was great. I'm a film major, and have always been interested in movie music. I agree with the films and tunes you selected, and I'm glad you included interviews with some of the directors. Thank you.

SYD BARRON, CHICAGO

No, thank *you*. Sadly, not all our readers were so satisfied. . . .

DEAR BLENDER

I turned to the 50 Greatest Musical Moments in Movie History to find where you would place the opening sequence of *Dazed and Confused*, scored by Aerosmith's classic "Sweet Emotion." Top 10, surely. Maybe even number 1. But no! You didn't include it at all — instead, you wasted space on scenes from *The Virgin Suicides* (hugely overrated), *Ali* (crap) and *American Psycho* (what the f#@%?). In the words of Ben Affleck: "The first lick I'd like to dedicate to your mother . . . f#@%er!"

AARON POTTS, SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA

DEAR BLENDER

Thank you, Phil Sutcliffe and *Blender*, for your moving tribute to the Who's John Entwistle [September]. I also appreciate how you took it one step further and put a lyric from "Boris the Spider," the first song Entwistle wrote for the band, on the spine of the magazine.

IAIN THOMAS, SIOUX CITY, IOWA

Layne Staley, in a happier time

"We're *not* on the *Blender* list? That's some funny shit, dude!"

"What time did the guy at the shop want these hogs back?" "Uh . . . I think he said 1969."

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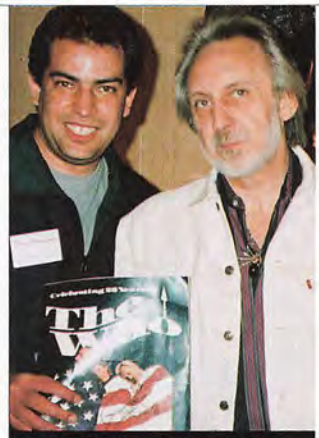
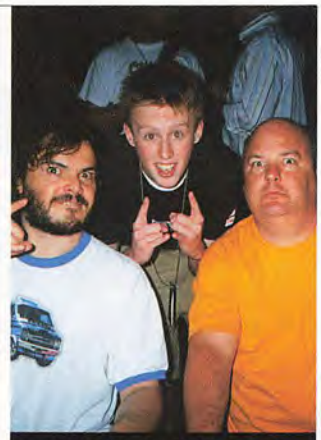


Ron Weeks and John Entwistle

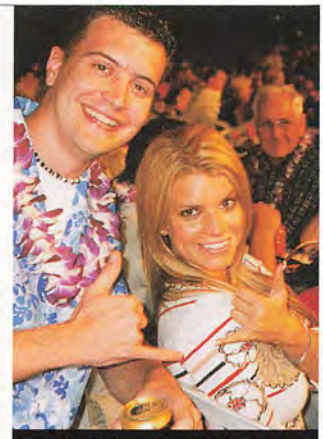
Bret Hyde and Ice Cube

Brian Jones and N.E.R.D.



Matt Mehltretter and Tenacious D

Shauna Ward and Incubus's Brandon Boyd



Mike Palm and Jessica Simpson

★ HAPPY HALLOWEEN, super guys and super ghouls! It's Superfan season! Actually, *every* season is Superfan season! Much 'spect to this month's winners: Ron, Bret, Brian, Matt, Shauna and Mike. If you want to be in the next issue of *Blender*, send your photos to Blender Superfan, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018. Don't forget to include your name, address and digits — and you might win an MP3 player similar to the one pictured at left. *Hell, yes!*

Jeffrey Mayer/Wirelmage.com (Staley); Kobal Collection (Dazed and Confused, Easy Rider); David Weiss (MP3)

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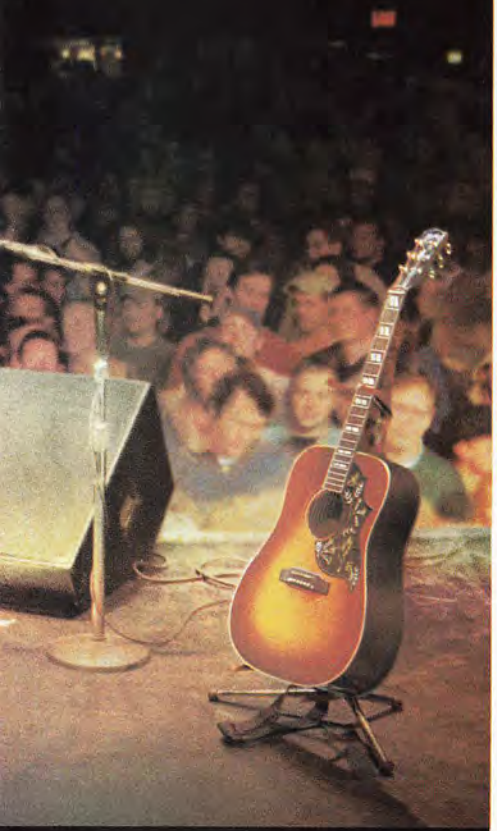

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This is the cover of Tool's *Aenima*. Not a flashback, dude.

Where's the right hand, Billy?

DEAR BLENDER

Being a faithful *Blender* reader, I quickly devoured your August issue. But I noticed a big mistake in your 50 Greatest Rawk Albums of All Time feature: You picked Tool's magnum opus *Aenima* as number 47, but you picture the cover art from their studio follow-up, *Lateralus*. I enjoy the fresh slant on the music industry that you provide, but you can't overlook significant details like that.

ATOM STREET, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

Our sincerest apologies. But hey — just cut out the accompanying picture of the correct album, stick it over the wrong one and everything will once again be right with the world!

DEAR BLENDER

I was disgusted by the news of Billy Joel's recent "problems" ["Just the Way He Is?", September]. Joel has problems? Please! My mother worked two jobs every day and rode the bus to work in beat-up shoes, and she never complained. Those are problems, Mr. Joel. Get over yourself! And as far as Michael Jackson goes ["Jacko Fumes," September], it's over for him. He's trying to blame his record company, Sony, for *Invincible*'s lackluster sales, but in fact, the album just plain sucks. Michael, start producing other groups — and stay away from the mic and the stage.

RUBEN RODRIGUEZ, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Britney Spears on vacation recently in Venice Beach, California. Justin Timberlake, are you reading this?

It was cool for a family to match in the '70s . . . the 1870s! Ha!

DEAR BLENDER

I really enjoyed your Boy-Band Babylon piece [September]. But why did you include Danny Bonaduce from the Partridge Family, which was a half-boy, half-girl band? Are you trying to tell us something about Susan Dey?

DONOVAN ROSANOWSKI, NEEDLES, CALIFORNIA

We are — lawyers, please note — *not* trying to tell you anything about Susan Dey. Except, maybe, that she shouldn't have done that *L.A. Law* reunion movie.

DEAR BLENDER

I'm just now going through your August issue — and I shouldn't have waited so long. Your piece about taking O-Town out for the evening ["Party Hardly"] was hilarious. I was about to turn the page, but decided to read a couple of paragraphs when I saw that the "band" was going to "party" with *Blender*. Man, was I ever rewarded. Thank you, once again, for delivering the goods. Peace.

AUSTIN RAY, COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

DEAR BLENDER

I was psyched to see your "Sexy. Young. Talented" piece spotlighting up-and-coming female musicians in your September issue. But guess what? When you talk about "a new wave of precocious female artists," you damn well better mean it. Since when is Mandy Moore "new"? If you're going to include her on your list, you might as well write about Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Jessica Simpson. By the way, while I'm at it: Am I alone in thinking that Britney's breast size seems to be fluctuating lately? She goes from mondo Mondays to teeny Tuesdays . . . you get the idea. Am I right or am I right?

TARA LOURYK, NEW YORK CITY

Kobal Collection (Partridge Family), LFI (Joel), Bauer-Griffin (Spears)

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- THE 42 BEST SONGS TO DO STUFF TO
- JOHN LENNON: HIS LIFE IN CDs
- BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
- GUNS N' ROSES
- BON JOVI
- NICK CARTER

LEANN RIMES

AS YOU'VE *NEVER* SEEN HER BEFORE

PLUS: HOW SHE SURVIVED PRETEEN FAME AND SHOCKING BETRAYAL

Frank Ockenfels 3

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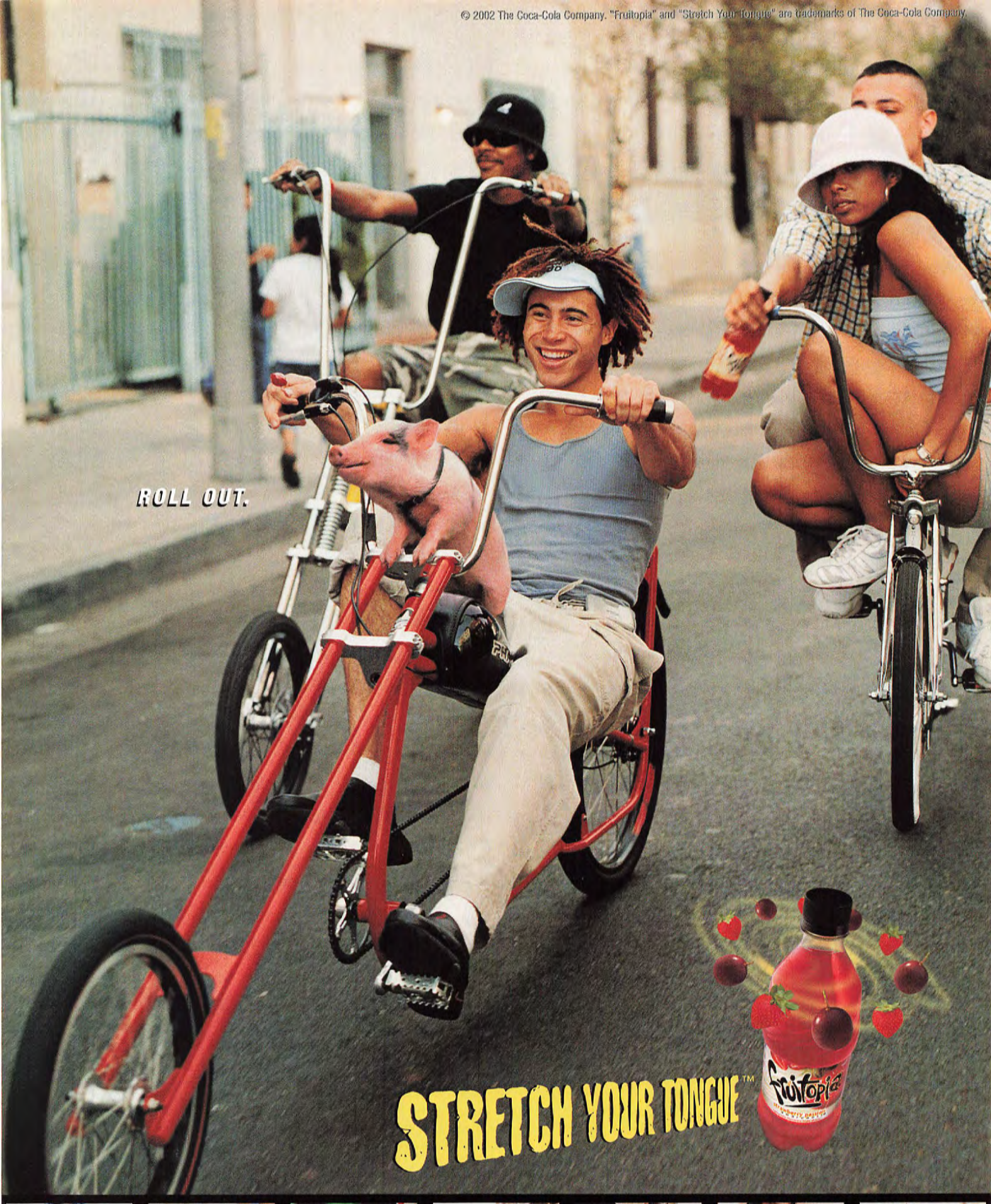


"In this corner . . ." Christina Aguilera (left) takes on former champ Mariah Carey . . . and all the rest!

Holiday Season Catfight!

Prepare for bombardment! Christina Aguilera, LeAnn Rimes, Mariah Carey, Shania Twain, Whitney Houston and TLC attempt to pump up record-company profits

Whitney Houston: the woozy veteran!

★ THE RECENT RELEASE of Christina Aguilera's long-awaited new single, "Dirrty," has marked the beginning of the record industry's most competitive period in recent memory.

From now through the holidays, an unusually large number of releases from top female artists — labels' commercial big guns — are expected to clog the charts as the divas fight it out.

"It's been a rough year in the record industry," explained one insider. "Companies are pulling out all the stops to claw back some revenue before the end of the year."

"The labels are looking for the magic bullet," said Tom Calderone, senior vice president of music and talent for MTV and MTV2. "All guns are blazing."

In an attempt to minimize their competition, labels are staggering the releases of their top female artists so they don't hit store shelves on the same date.

Shania Twain: the reigning champion!

Record companies are also counting on the customary sales surge during the Christmas shopping season. Last year, album sales more than doubled in the last two weeks of December ($65 million) compared to the same period from October 28 to November 11.

Blender asked several industry experts how they think the divas will fare — and got their opinions on the other big album releases leading up to Christmas. *JON O'HARA*

Clockwise from top left: Lester Cohen/WireImage.com; Gina James/Retna Ltd.; Wayne Stambler/Corbis Outline; Steve Granitz/WireImage.com

Hit or Miss? >>>>>

All the season's big releases — and their chances of success, according to our panel of experts!

OCTOBER 1

LeANN RIMES

Twisted Angel (Curb)

The country cutie is all grown up and making pop records. Her shift into the mainstream (with 2001's *I Need You*) has cost her sales, but dreams of Shania Twain–style crossover success could still materialize.

VERDICT: **ONE TO WATCH**

OCTOBER 1

THE ROLLING STONES *Forty Licks* (Virgin)

The band marks its fortieth anniversary with a world tour and this hits compilation, which also features four new tracks. One concern: Is this enough to lure baby-boomer dollars away from *Elvis: 30 #1 Hits?*

VERDICT: **SAFE BET**

OCTOBER 8

BON JOVI *Bounce* (Island)

"Their last record [2000's *Crush*, which sold 2 million copies] was a big comeback," says Bob Bell, a senior buyer for Wherehouse Entertainment. "It proved that they're still as strong as ever."

VERDICT: **LOOKS PROMISING!**

OCTOBER 15

FAITH HILL *Cry* (Warner Bros.)

Hill is second in crossover success only to Shania Twain, and her fourth CD, 1999's *Breathe*, was a seven-times-platinum blockbuster. This hotly anticipated follow-up is, Bell says, "A big deal. A *very* big deal."

VERDICT: **SUREFIRE!**

OCTOBER 15

TORI AMOS

Scarlet's Walk (Epic)

Amos's *Boys for Pele* (1996) sold a million; last year's *Strange Little Girls* just 358,000. "I've heard the new album and am convinced the world will embrace Tori again," says Bruce Warren, program director at Philadelphia's WXPN radio station. Why? "It reminds me of her first."

VERDICT: **LOOKS PROMISING!**

Tori Amos, doing her patented Cheshire cat imitation

Perhaps Keith and Mick would care for a nice, soothing cup of tea?

OCTOBER 15

SANTANA *Shaman* (Arista)

This is the big follow-up to 1999's Grammy-grabbing *Supernatural*, the guitar god's biggest album. "Carlos's moment was a while ago," Warren says. "Pop culture these days is as enduring as a toilet flush."

VERDICT: **ALREADY PEAKED**

OCTOBER 22

FOO FIGHTERS *1x1* (RCA)

Over three albums, the Foos have never sold under a million, and Dave Grohl's workhorse ethic has yet to let fans down. "They're one of the core bands of modern-rock radio," Bell says.

VERDICT: **LOOKING GOOD!**

OCTOBER 22

CHRISTINA AGUILERA

Title TBD (RCA)

Aguilera's debut sold 8 million. This time, Glen Ballard (the man behind Alanis Morissette) and Linda Perry (the former 4 Non Blonde behind Pink) help with writing and producing. The must-hear track is "Can't Hold Us Down," on which Aguilera bashes Eminem and Limp Bizkit's Fred Durst for the verbal abuse they've thrown her way. "Anticipation is high," Bell notes.

VERDICT: **HUGE HIT!**

NOVEMBER 5

WHITNEY HOUSTON

Whatchulookinat (Arista)

It's been four years since her last CD, *My Love Is Your Love*, which sold 2.7 million. "The disappointing first single, 'Whatchulookinat,' is already struggling on the radio after only two weeks," says Michelle Santosuosso, program director for Los Angeles urban radio station KHHT Hot 92.3 FM. "And a Puffy remix is already on the way — another sign the record is teetering on the edge."

VERDICT: **LOOKS SHAKY**

NOVEMBER 5

R. KELLY *Loveland* (Jive)

Up on child-pornography charges in Illinois, Kelly responded in song with a new track, "Heaven I Need a Hug." Prospects for his new CD are dubious. "His pop audience will be scared off unless he delivers the most amazing record of his life, which he's fully capable of doing," says Santosuosso.

VERDICT: **CLOSE CALL**

NOVEMBER 12

SHANIA TWAIN

Up (Mercury)

The queen of country crossover hugeness. What can mere words say that nearly 30 million albums sold can't? "Can I reuse what I said for Faith Hill?" Bell asks.

VERDICT: **SMASH HIT!**

NOVEMBER 12

TLC *3D* (Arista)

Even with new tracks featuring the late Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, the fourth album from the 21 million–selling hip-hop group could be hurting a bit. "With 'crazy' Lisa gone," Santosuosso says, "there may be a lack of chemistry."

VERDICT: **TOSSUP**

NOVEMBER 19

PEARL JAM

Title TBD (Epic)

Their 1991 debut, *Ten*, is still their best-selling release. They've moved more than 25 million records over the course of six studio albums, but their last, 2000's *Binaural*, stumbled at just over 700,000 units shifted. "The band *needs* to make a statement," Warren says.

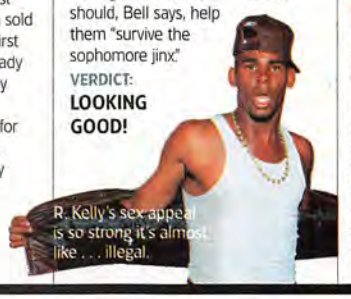
VERDICT: **LOW EXPECTATIONS**

NOVEMBER 26

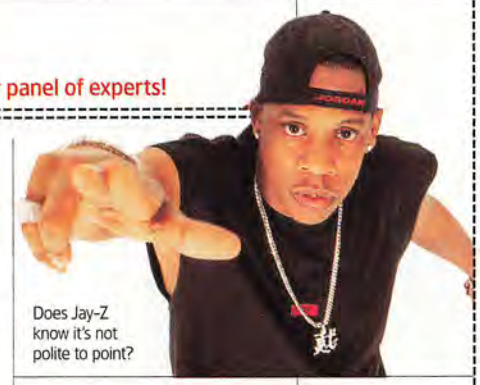
SUM 41 *Title TBD* (Island)

The Canadian pop-punks moved a surprising 1.7 million of their full-length debut, 2001's *All Killer No Filler*. To keep fresh, they've beefed up their sound with heavy, ass-kicking '80s metal riffs — which should, Bell says, help them "survive the sophomore jinx."

VERDICT: **LOOKING GOOD!**



R. Kelly's sex appeal is so strong it's almost like . . . illegal.



Does Jay-Z know it's not polite to point?

NOVEMBER

AUDIOSLAVE

Title TBD (Epic)

Having weathered intraband power struggles, management woes and even a breakup, the Chris Cornell–fronted Rage Against the Machine project is finally a reality. One concern: Will anybody care?

VERDICT: **TOSSUP**

NOVEMBER

DEFTONES

Lovers (Maverick/Warner Bros.)

Even with competition these days from Slipknot and Limp Bizkit, these Sacramento godfathers of nü-metal have moved 2 million albums over seven years. "This band has a very strong fan base," Bell says.

VERDICT: **FUCKIN' A!**

NOVEMBER

JAY-Z

The Gift and the Curse (Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam)

Jay-Z has sold more than 15 million albums since 1996. But will the poor sales of his *Unplugged* and R. Kelly collaboration, *Best of Both Worlds*, hurt? "Still has game and will sell," Santosuosso says.

VERDICT: **LOOKS PROMISING!**

When we say "jump," Sum 41 say "how high?"

DECEMBER 10

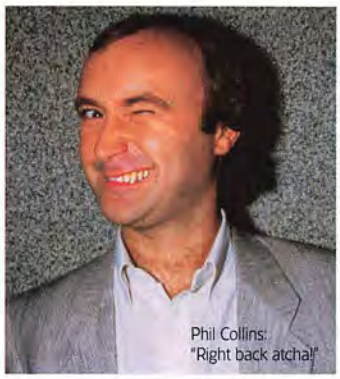
MARIAH CAREY

Title TBD (MonarC/Island)

The first release since her public meltdown. "She has massive image problems to overcome and a disconnection with her core fan base," Santosuosso says. Will her return to the five-octave "Hero"-era Mariah of old help? Santosuosso says yes: "Her fans prefer ballads to rap."

VERDICT: **LOOKS PROMISING!**

First column, from top: Theo Wargo/Wireimage.com; Ed Westmacott/RetnaUK. Second column, from top: Luis Sanchis/PR Newswire Photo Service/Newscom; LFI. Third column, from top: LFI; Jeffrey Mayer/Wireimage.com; Kevin Mazur/Wireimage.com; Ernie Paniccioli/Retna Ltd. Fourth column, from top: LFI; Michael Wilfling/Vanit/Retna Ltd.



Phil Collins: "Right back atcha!"

Do You Rock?

Phil Collins

Does the elfin legend who once felt it "coming in the air tonight" . . . rock?

Ever trash a hotel room?
I'm the kind of guy who goes around putting the wrappers back on the soap. The stereotypical rock-star-trashing-a-hotel-room thing? Those days had just passed by the time I was in a band big enough to do it.

Drum set–shaped pool in the backyard?
I've got a swimming pool and I've got a drum kit, but not a drum kit–shaped pool. It'd be kind of complicated. I suppose you could make the floor tom into a hot tub.

Get lucky while flying on the Concorde during Live Aid?
Get lucky? You can't do anything on the Concorde. You can barely turn over, it's so small. I didn't even nap. There was a lot of nervous energy: "Will we get there in time? Will I fuck up 'Against All Odds' again, like I did in London?" But no action.

Stripper's pole in your house?
No. There's no room, with the sex trapeze. I'm kidding.

Would you rather get drunk with Ozzy Osbourne or Brian Eno?
I played with Ozzy at the Queen's Jubilee show in June and spent some time talking to him. He asked to use my vocal coach and my dressing room to warm up. A couple days later, he sent me this really nice present. I really warmed to him, and I've got an awful lot of time for Ozzy now. Having said that, I still think Eno would be better conversation. So, Eno.

Big in Japan?
I used to be. I was big everywhere, actually. Don't know if I am now. . . .

Even been declared legally dead?
No.

Creatively dead?
Some would say yes. *SCOTT DESIMON*

Verdict

PHIL COLLINS ROCKS . . . *HARD!*

→ PHIL COLLINS'S NEW ALBUM, DUE OUT IN NOVEMBER, IS *TESTIFY* (ATLANTIC)

News Roundup!

In addition to singing the theme song for the new James Bond movie, *Die Another Day*, **MADONNA** will make a cameo appearance in the film, playing a fencing instructor.

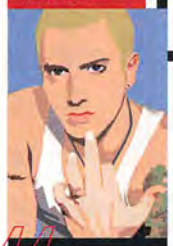
LUCIANO PAVAROTTI has announced that his final performance will be on his seventieth birthday, October 12, 2005.

MIKE MYERS has been in talks with **ROGER DALTREY** about playing Keith Moon in an upcoming film about the Who.

According to the Bahamas Department of Civil Aviation, the pilot of the plane that crashed and killed **AALIYAH** in August 2001 had traces of cocaine and alcohol in his body.

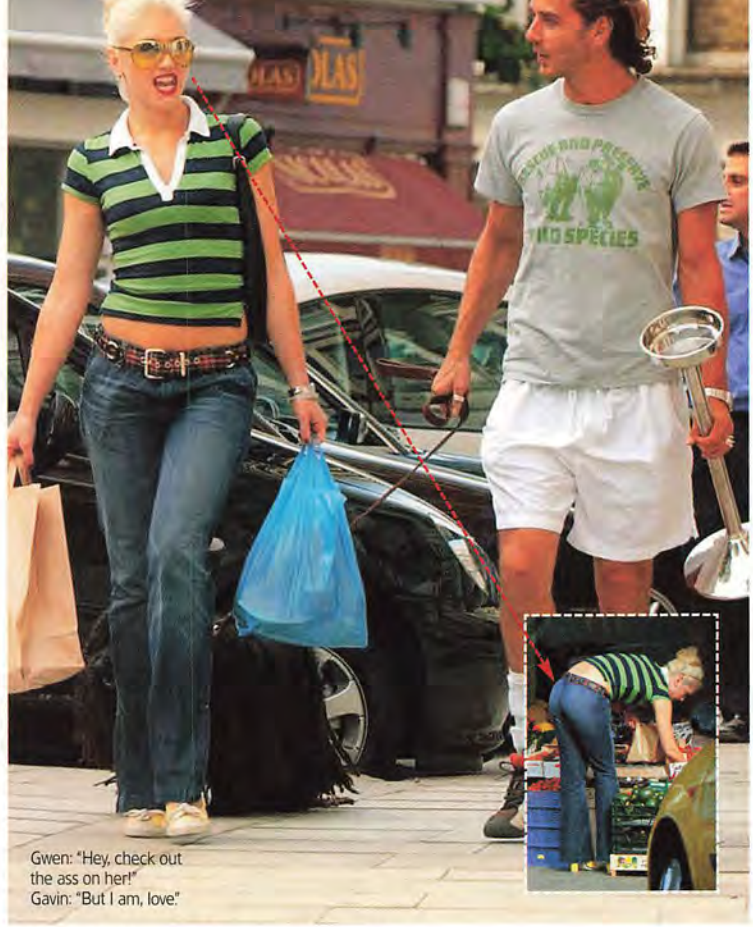
Los Angeles–based producer Gary Binkow has filed suit against **THE OSBOURNES**, claiming he pitched them the idea for their reality TV show in 1999.

Word!



"That my penis is small."

EMINEM, ON WHAT HE FEARS MOST



Gwen: "Hey, check out the ass on her!"
Gavin: "But I am, love."

"I Do" x 2!

Gwen and Gavin will have not one wedding but *two*!

✶ NO DOUBT singer Gwen Stefani and her fiancé, Bush frontman Gavin Rossdale, pictured here strolling in London, recently announced that they plan to have two weddings. One will be held in Los Angeles and one in London — Stefani and Rossdale's respective homes. "We didn't want to impose on anyone," Rossdale explained, "and we want everyone there, so we decided to do it in both places."

John Galliano, known for his nonconformist and offbeat clothing, will be designing Stefani's bridal gown. *CLARISSA LASKY*

Dallas Smith: "Orange you glad I didn't say banana!"

Tell Us a Joke!

DALLAS SMITH OF DEFAULT

"A MOM, DAD and their two sons are watching TV. The dad gives the mom a look, and they head upstairs. The two kids wonder what their parents are doing, so they go up to take a peek and check out the action. "Whoa!" says the older boy. "Remember this when Mom gets on your case for sucking your thumb!" *AS TOLD TO PETER GOZINYA*

Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis (Collins); Splashnews (Stefani and Rossdale, 2); Wireimage.com (Smith)

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Amerie

A leggy Georgetown graduate who sings like Mary J.? No wonder P. Diddy wants a piece of her

TEXT BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAREN PEARSON

★ "MY SEXINESS IS, I think, quite subtle. I wouldn't say it's particularly pronounced," says Amerie with a coy smile that suggests anything but. "You know, there are lots of different kinds of sexy: There's Meg Ryan sexy, Julia Roberts sexy, Marilyn Monroe sexy. All different, all sexy. I still find it unusual when people call me sexy, because I see myself more as a goofball."

It's early morning in Providence, Rhode Island, and Amerie is midway through a promotional tour of America's radio stations. Her debut album, *All I Have* — which is as smooth and, yes, sexy as the music of Mary J. Blige, but even more sensual — is about to hit stores, propelling this 22-year-old toward stardom. Advance word is distinctly positive, her face (and body) plaster billboards nationwide and Sean "P. Diddy" Combs counts himself among her fans.

"He came up to me at a party and told me we should make him hits together," she coos. "That's, like, incredible — an amazing feeling! Sean Combs! I feel so honored."

Born to an African-American father and a Korean mother, Amerie Rogers had something of an international upbringing: Dad was in the military, and his post changed regularly throughout her childhood. She lived in Massachusetts, South Korea, Texas, Germany and finally, when she was in fifth grade, Washington, D.C., where the family settled. She can still speak a little bit of Korean, and is happy to prove it when asked. "I'm not quite as bilingual as I should be, which is a shame," she says, "but I can get by."

She majored in English at prestigious Georgetown University, and has followed her mother, a concert pianist and artist, by developing a broad creative arc.

"I have ambitions to act," she says. "Television, movies, Broadway. I've always wanted to do voice-overs for commercials and for a major Disney animation. Friends have told me I've got the right kind of goofy voice." Her aspirations don't stop there, however. "When I was younger, I used to draw cartoon strips and write short stories. I'd love to develop that strand, and I want to write a novel, because I really love to write."

But one thing at a time, yes?

"Oh, sure. I believe everyone can do everything they want to, just not at the same time," she says, laughing. "So right now I'll sing, and see where that takes me. But after that, it's time to branch out." [BLENDER]

> "My sexiness is, I think, quite subtle."

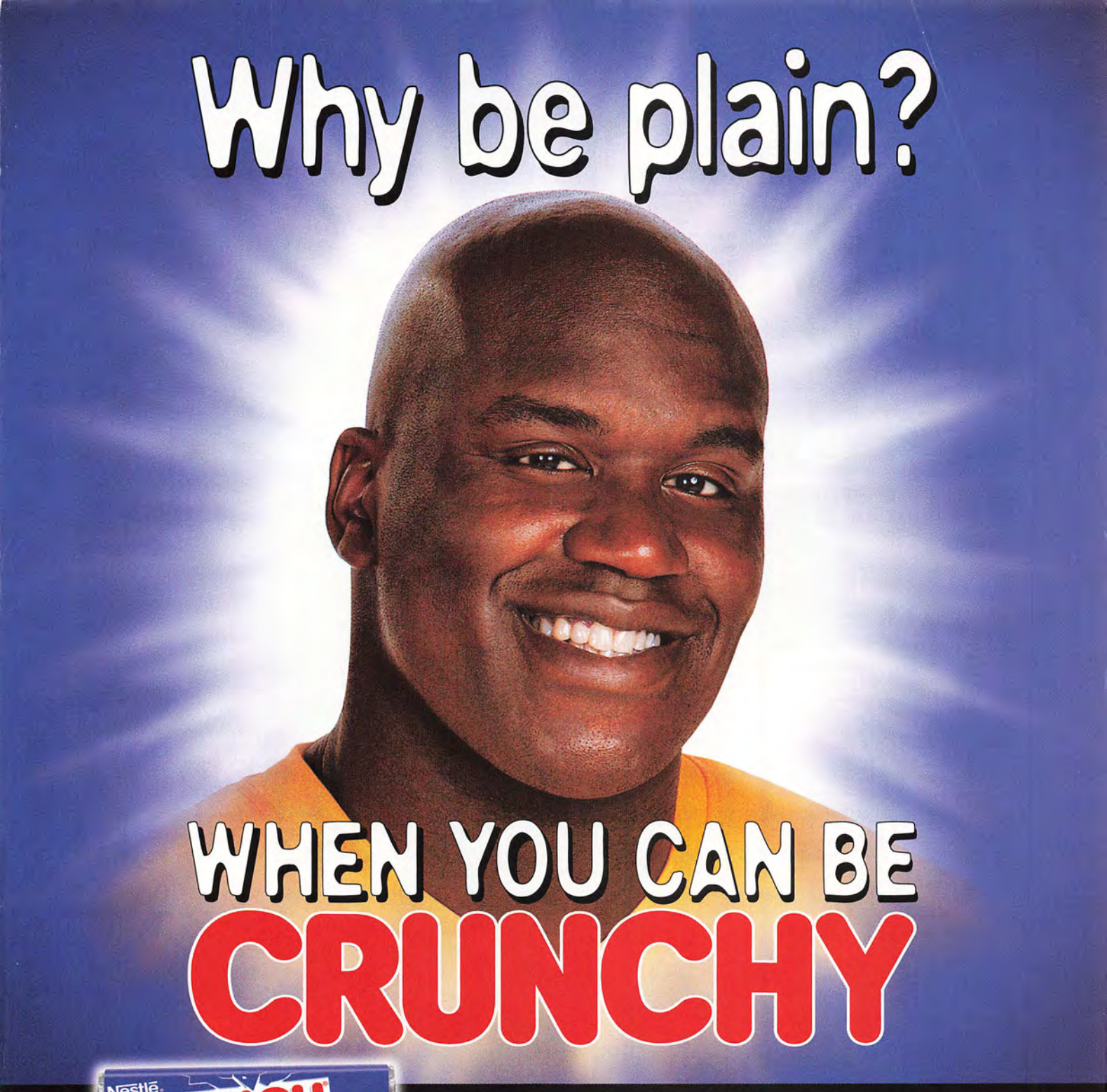
OUT NOW

ALL I HAVE
COLUMBIA

GREEN CORDUROY JACKET AND SHORTS BY MATTHEW WILLIAMSON. SHOES BY JIMMY CHOO. JEWELRY BY M&J SAVITT

Hair: Kiele Davis makeup: Eric Spearman for MAC/Mac wardrobe stylist: Eric Archibald & David F. Zambrano

Why be plain?



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J.Lo and Affleck:
Can't stop progress!

LEAD ACTOR IS THE NEW BACKUP DANCER

AND OTHER LATE-BREAKING DEVELOPMENTS

Budget Car Rental	is the new	WorldCom
Infectious greed	is the new	Irrational exuberance
Sesame Street	is the new	Gaza Strip
Suing fast-food restaurants for making you fat	is the new	"Supersize it!"
Sex and the City	is the new	*Golden Girls*
Global catastrophe in 2019!	is the new	Global partying like it's 1999!
Pennsylvania miner	is the new	Baby Jessica
"My gay fiancé lives in Toronto"	is the new	"My girlfriend lives in Niagara Falls"
Anna Nicole Smith	is the new	Ozzy
P. Diddy	is the new	Anna Nicole Smith
Liza Minelli	is the new	P. Diddy

News Roundup!

KELLY OSBOURNE and Disney are in talks for her to star in the remake of the 1976 Jodie Foster movie *Freaky Friday.*

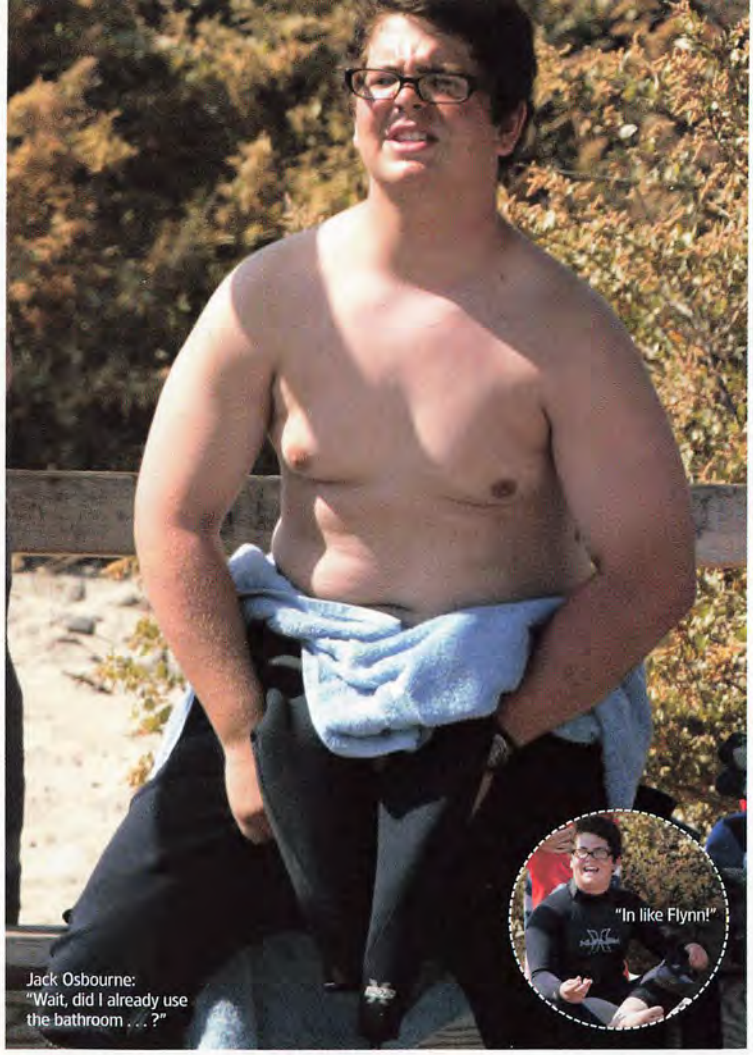
A fisherman in Birmingham, England, said **EMINEM**'s beats helped improve a recent angling session: "Inside the first 10 minutes I had three or four bites, and then I landed a whopping five-pound tench."

Rapper **CAM'RON** has pleaded not guilty to charges of criminal possession of marijuana, a firearm and a forged instrument after police pulled him over and allegedly found the drug, a .22-caliber handgun and an unauthorized fire-department placard for all-areas parking.

DMX and members of **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE** are collaborating on "Here I Come" (for the upcoming film *Cradle 2 the Grave,* starring DMX and Jet Li) and "We Gonna Get It Right" (for MTV's *Jackass* movie).

Word!

"I think that if what you feel you're doing is right in your heart, then you can't be wrong!"
KORN GUITARIST MUNKY, ON HITLER



Jack Osbourne: "Wait, did I already use the bathroom . . . ?"

"In like Flynn!"

"This towel has a brown streak on it!"

Jumpin' Jack Flash

Jack Osbourne lets it all hang out

★ JACK OSBOURNE, pictured recently in Malibu Beach, California, surfed, signed autographs and struggled to get in and out of his wetsuit. Days later, the 16-year-old son of singer Ozzy Osbourne injured his arm after jumping off a Malibu pier with several friends.

Jack Osbourne has recently been linked with British model Catalina Guiardo, 28. (FYI: The age of consent for sex in Britain is 16, but 18 in California.) *CLARISSA LASKY*

Jewel? Likes *Blender*!

BLENDER SESSIONS!

The new series of shows coming to you soon, kicked off by . . . the ever-lovely Jewel! Whoo!

★ "I REALLY LIKE *Blender*," Jewel said when she played the inaugural *Blender* Sessions show in Los Angeles in July. "All of my friends really like it, too."

The singer, who has sold 20 million albums in her career, was performing solo at L.A.'s Chrysler House in front of a select audience of 450 to help launch a new series of shows organized by *Blender.* These *Blender* Sessions will showcase major artists performing acoustic sets in intimate venues. Go to blender.com for info about future *Blender* Sessions.

Big Pictures (Lopez and Affleck): William Kazer/Reuters/Newscom (Big Bird); Jonelle Weaver/Taxi/Getty Images (hamburger); Frazer Harrison/Getty/Newscom (Smith); Kevin Mazur/Wireimage.com (Ozzy Osbourne); Jean-Paul Aussenard/Wireimage.com (Minelli); George De Sota/ImageDirect/Newscom (P. Diddy); Wireimage.com (Jewel); All Action (Jack Osbourne, 3)

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OK Go

Upbeat Chicago foursome adds a twist to primitive rock. That's right — organ!

TEXT BY NICK DUERDEN PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

★ IT IS EARLY Friday morning. By rock & roll standards, way too early: 7:30 A.M. Damian Kulash, the frontman of OK Go, is looking crumpled. Lounging around his Chicago home, he appears to be on the brink of an almighty yawn from which he won't return.

"Yesterday was a day off from the tour, and we were supposed to be taking things easy," he says. "But the White Stripes were playing downtown. Some friends and I went and, well, had a few too many drinks."

He hasn't been able to contemplate breakfast yet, just a necessary can of Red Bull. "I apologize," he says, "because you won't get me at my most lucid."

While he takes a break to compose himself, here's a brief band history: OK Go, a quartet from Chicago, will turn 3 this year. In addition to Kulash, the band comprises bassist Tim Nordwind, keyboardist Andy Duncan and drummer Dan Konopka, all 26. Only now are they giving up their day jobs; Kulash was a designer for an advertising agency.

"I spent six months working on campaigns for the Pillsbury Doughboy," he recalls. "I found it intolerably whoring."

The band's self-titled debut sounds like joyous relief. It is buoyant, chugga-chugga rock & roll with a big, fat smile on its face, music that combines the synth-pop perkiness of peak-era Cars with Weezer — minus the neuroses.

"I would love to tell you I'm not neurotic, but my friends would maybe suggest otherwise," Kulash says, smiling. "Musically, I've always wanted to be upbeat and entertaining. There's already enough testosterone boy-rock out there. I love melody. My favorite album is *Purple Rain*. It may be anguished in certain places, but it's also fantastically uplifting. That's what I want us to be like."

This triggers a thought. "I'm going to make myself a coffee," he says, clearly still feeling the previous night's excess. "Wish me luck." [BLENDER]

OUT NOW

OK GO
CAPITOL

ON ANDY: JEANS BY **LEVI'S**. ON TIM: JEANS BY **LEVI'S**; WHITE SWEATBAND BY **PUMA**. ON DAN: JEANS BY **LEVI'S**

OK Go, from left: Andy Duncan, Damian Kulash, Tim Nordwind, Dan Konopka

Grooming: Andie Markoe-Byrne; wardrobe styling: Andrea Cohen

The mini-market.
A microwave burrito
and a new state map.

Drive the 5-speed Golf. **Drivers wanted.**

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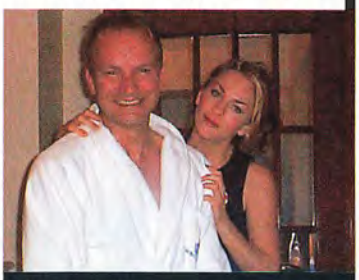
Pop Star Must-Have

100% TRUE!

DR. DOT!

Forget the man-servants and lap dogs. The newest star accessory is man's *and* woman's best friend. . . . That's right: Dr. Dot, New York massage artist!



Sting: "Lower!"

Debbie Harry: "Harder!"

Foo Fighters' Taylor Hawkins: "Closer!"

Ice-T: "Just right."

→ *WWW.DRDOT.DE*

News Roundup!

After playing the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* theme song in their live act, Breeders **KIM** and **KELLEY DEAL** have landed a cameo in an upcoming episode of the show. **BRITNEY SPEARS** is also rumored to be making a future appearance.

JACK BLACK is set to star in *School of Rock*, in which he'll play a musician-turned-substitute teacher at an uptight private school.

TRICK DADDY has denied giving shelter to his associate Ryan Richard "Tater Head" Hobbs, who is being sought by authorities for the armed kidnapping of his daughter from her mother.

SEAN "P. DIDDY" COMBS has tapped corpulent '80s rapper **HEAVY D** to help run his big-and-tall clothing line.

JAY-Z and a business partner recently purchased the Armadale vodka brand.

Word!

"I try to see myself as Spielberg."

P. DIDDY

Trick or treat? Neither — it's Bob Dylan!

Wigstock!

Who's under that fake beard and wig? Why, it's Bob Dylan!

★ BOB DYLAN appeared at the Newport Folk Festival in Newport, Rhode Island, in August donning a bizarre wig and false beard for the entire length of his two-hour set.

Dylan, 61, would not comment on why he wore the ensemble, but sources close to him claimed he was "getting into the spirit of the day." According to one spectator, "There were some amusing moments when he was trying to switch guitars fast. The cowboy hat was nearly knocked off his head, and he was holding down the hair."

Dylan was appearing at the festival for the first time since 1965, when he was booed off the stage for bringing elements of electric rock & roll into folk music. *CLARISSA LASKY*

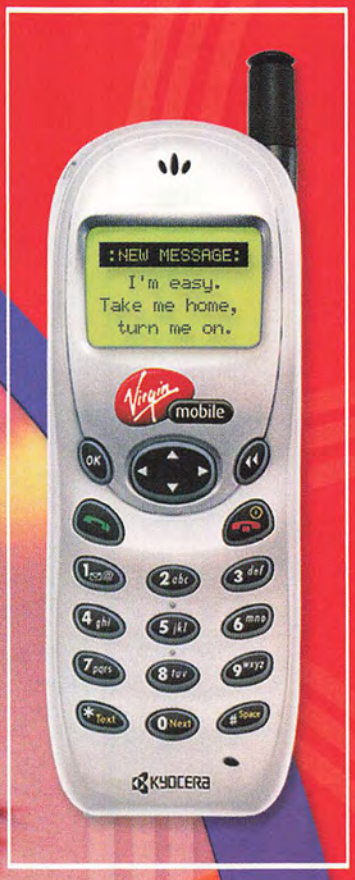
LICK ME! >>>>>

According to a recent Harris Poll survey, 22 percent of Americans think Bruce Springsteen is more deserving of having his image on a postage stamp than any other pop star, including Madonna, Cher, the Who, Ozzy Osbourne and Britney Spears.

Like these? Write the Postmaster General!

Courtesy of Dr Dot (Dr. Dot, 5); Bill Powers/Reuters/Landov.com (Dylan); Daniel Hansen (stamps, 4)

ring it on.



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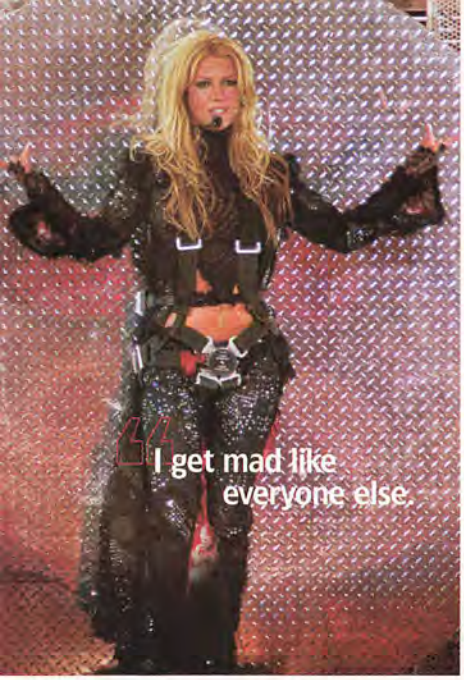

Going Home

Britney Spears has moved back in with Mom. But why?

BRITNEY SPEARS has announced that she will take six months off and move back into her mother's house in Kentwood, Louisiana. Spears's publicist said that the singer's first extended vacation in four years would afford her time to "read scripts, travel, write music and hang out with her family and friends. . . . There is no drama here."

The decision came on the heels of a recent series of troubles for the singer *Forbes* magazine has named "the most powerful celebrity on the planet":

- In July, Spears ended her world tour on a controversial note when she quit a Mexico City show halfway through and flipped off an "aggressive" cameraman. "I'm human too," she said. "I get mad like everyone else."
- In May, her parents separated after 30 years of marriage, citing her career as a factor.
- Her latest album, *Britney,* has sold 4 million copies — fewer than half the sales of her previous release, *Oops . . . I Did It Again,* and just a third of those of her 1999 debut, . . . *Baby One More Time.*
- She has split from her former beau, 'N Sync frontman Justin Timberlake.
- A new Spears song, "My Love Was Always There," believed to be a lament over her breakup, has been criticized as a direct ripoff of Enrique Iglesias's "Maybe."

Friends say Spears — whose net worth *Forbes* estimated at $39.2 million last year — is "completely miserable." *B.D. WEIS*

Timberlake and Spears, in happier times

News Roundup!

Cocaine is believed to have been a factor in the heart attack that killed Who bassist **JOHN ENTWISTLE.**

JACK WHITE of the White Stripes will play a bit part in the upcoming film *Cold Mountain,* which stars Nicole Kidman, Jude Law, Natalie Portman and Renée Zellweger. The movie will be released in spring 2003; White will also write songs for its soundtrack.

Officials in Russia's space program have formally chosen 'N Sync's **LANCE BASS** to be the next civilian launched into space.

SNOOP DOGG is in talks to play Huggy Bear in the upcoming *Starsky & Hutch* movie, a remake of the popular '70s television show.

BOYZ II MEN have publicly supported **MICHAEL JACKSON**'s assertion that the record industry is biased against African-American artists.

Original gangsta **ICE-T** is the new spokesman for Posse Pops, an ice cream line intended to create a positive message for inner-city youth.

Word!

There's only so much behind one woman should show her public.
MARY J. BLIGE

★ Where Are They Now? ★

Life After Rock

Bob Nastanovich

[of Pavement]

THEN!	NOW!
Multi-instrumentalist, 1990–2000	Thoroughbred horse owner, Louisville, Kentucky

★ "BEING IN PAVEMENT was terribly exciting, a great way to go through your twenties — we traveled the world and made a decent living. On a good night, we felt like we were one of the best bands in the world. It was glorious.

"My most significant contribution was in the live show. The other guys were tied down playing their parts. I was freelancing [on Moog, percussion and backup vocals], making the show vibrant.

"I felt like we participated heavily in the '90s, and it was time to move on. We had worked extremely hard in 1999. It's a lot easier to make that kind of decision [to quit] when you're completely exhausted — though it wasn't mine directly.

"When I was a freshman at the University of Virginia, I would go to a racetrack in West Virginia with an incredibly intelligent friend of mine. He surmised that he could beat horse racing from a mathematical perspective. I would do slightly better than him by handicapping the races my own way. I became hooked.

"I became a savage bettor."

"Pavement gave me money to bet, and I became a savage bettor. I figured I'd be able to join the couple hundred Americans who make a living betting on horse racing. That became my goal. I moved across from Churchill Downs in 1995.

"Owning a racehorse is taking the gamble one step further. A friend and I have owned about 30 horses. The first horse we bought was called Need a Stack. We bought him for $5,000 and ran him a couple weeks later, and he won. We've won 21 races.

"Ninety percent of my money comes from Pavement. We played 900 live shows. We made a lot on Lollapalooza '95. Pavement bought this house and my stable. I think Stephen Malkmus made a fair bit of money, which he deserves. He wrote the songs. Then again, if we'd had a hit song, I would be able to afford better horses.

"As for Pavement, there's never been talk of doing it again — it's time to be guys who are over 30. Now I'm chasing my dream: the racing game." *AS TOLD TO JON REGARDIE*

Clockwise from top right: courtesy of Bob Nastanovich; Dimitrios Kambouris/Fashion Wire Daily/Retna Ltd.; FHR/Queen/Zuma Press; Dennis Kleiman/Retna Ltd.

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imate smoothness
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SKYY Vodka® 40% alc/vol (80 proof). ©2002 SKYY Spirits, LLC. San Francisco, CA.
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TRY THIS ON THE PHONE!

HOW TO TALK DIRTY BY

TRINA

On "No Panties," her raunchy hit collaboration with Tweet, Miami native Trina says that the loving caress of a woman doesn't come for free. But the sexy rapper's advice on how to have phone "relations" sure does!

AS TOLD TO CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY SHUR

1 Start Off Slow!

"You should definitely start slow. Aggressiveness can be a turn-off. You want to be shy and innocent, and then go into the four-course meal. Ha ha ha! Maybe I'll say something like, 'I can picture me and you together face-to-face. Or I can just picture your face against . . . Ah, I'll just leave it to your imagination to say where on me.'"

2 Hot + Wet = Good!

"The first time I talked dirty was with my first boyfriend, when I was about 17. I was just being fresh, but not being bold about it. The first time I really got down and dirty, I was much older, and just on the phone. Like, 'I'm very hot; I just got out of the shower; I'm walking around naked and wet.' To guys, that's fine. But guys: Don't practice. It's got to be natural."

3 Food for Thought!

"A good line for a man would be something like, 'I was just about to go eat lunch, but I'd rather eat you instead.' Something like that. Actually, that was said to me. It was funny, but flirty and sexy. Very hot. Did it work? It did. You can do it anywhere. It can be better to sneak it in where you wouldn't want someone talking like that. Planes are very exciting."

4 Phone It In? Yes!

"I think it's better over the phone. Over the phone, you can lie back in the dark with some slow music. You're talking to this guy and he's really, really turning you on. If it gets boring, you can always turn on the television. Or ask the other person to come over. It's all fun. But remember, sometimes romance is better than dirty talking. A rose is nice as a gift . . . so is a pair of panties."

LINGERIE BY **VICTORIA'S SECRET**. SHOES BY **MICHAEL PERRY**. NECKLACE, BRACELET AND DIAMOND-SHAPED RING BY **JACOB AND COMPANY**.

TRINA'S ALBUM
→ ***DIAMOND PRINCESS***
(SLIP-N-SLIDE/ATLANTIC)
IS OUT NOW.

"I'm very hot; I just got out of the shower."

Prop styling: Chelsea Maruskin for Arthouse; hair: Terrence Davidson; makeup: Christopher Michael; wardrobe styling: Alexander Allen Transformers @ Mel Bryant

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–Roger Ebert

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MIRAMAX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

The Beta Band, from left: Robin Jones, John Maclean, Steve Mason and Richard Greentree — four men, one band, one bag

What's in Your Bag?

The Beta Band

At Amoeba Records, 6400 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, California

SNOOP DOGG
DOGGYSTYLE
Greentree: "My favorite thing about Snoop? He's got a slick, smooth voice. I'm not up on his songs or his albums — I just like it when I hear it. That's why I want this: so I can get more into him."

WU-TANG CLAN
ENTER THE WU-TANG (36 CHAMBERS)
Maclean: "Classic Wu-Tang. Every band has its classic, and this is theirs. Such great hits as 'Shame on a Nuh' and 'Can It Be All So Simple.' Total listenability."

THE SAINTS
BIG HITS FROM THE UNDERGROUND
Mason: "Punk band from Australia from the late '70s or early '80s with a brass section. I haven't heard a lot of their stuff, but what I have heard, I really like."

BOB DYLAN
HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED
Jones: "I grew up with this album. It's a classic. I like the cover. I like the shirt he's wearing. I like that he looks like a miserable guy. I don't have much more to say about it." *MATT PRICE*

→ THE BETA BAND'S LATEST ALBUM IS *HOT SHOTS II* (ASTRALWERKS)

News Roundup!

OZZY OSBOURNE is being sued by two of his former band members, bassist Bob Daisley and drummer Lee Kerslake, after their performances were removed from the reissue of Osbourne's first two solo albums to save money on royalties.

WILL SMITH, **CHRIS ROCK** and **JESSE JACKSON** have all spoken out in support of rapper **SLICK RICK**, who faces deportation to his native England over a charge of attempted murder there in 1991.

NICKELBACK have won a lawsuit against their former manager over ownership rights to an unreleased album.

After months of negotiations, 16 hours of community service, fines and letters of apology, authorities dismissed all charges against Backstreet Boy **NICK CARTER** for resisting arrest outside a Tampa Bay nightclub.

Word!

"I don't have a right to talk about anything, because I got caught four years ago . . . in a Los Angeles toilet."
GEORGE MICHAEL

"Girls, sweets will rot your teeth! Here, here's a . . . banana."

Back to School

A cheesy theme night in which dancers dress in school uniforms is swallowing British club culture whole!

A NEW TREND in clubbing has taken Britain by storm: School Disco.com, a weekly theme night for which attendees are obliged to dress up in school uniforms.

"If you're with your friends getting ready to celebrate your twenty-first birthday, do you want to go to a normal club?" asks School Disco.com promoter Bobby Sanchez. "Or do you want to go to a night with 1,500 women in school uniforms, where the DJ will play anything you ask him to?"

Founded three years ago in a London restaurant, School Disco.com now attracts 20,000 revelers a month to a string of clubs around Britain. Its strict dress code mandates the school uniforms; the DJ spins '80s hits and TV themes. Its Web site (schooldisco.com) reports 1.5 million hits a day, and a School Disco.com compilation album recently reached number 1 on the U.K. charts. Even Mick Jagger recently dropped by.

"He said he just had to see it for himself," says Sanchez, who made the recently knighted Rolling Stones frontman don a schoolboy's tie.

Although School Disco.com is currently sponsoring a much-ballyhooed theme night in the notorious European clubber's getaway of Ibiza, Spain (and despite the recent resurgence of DJ culture in the U.S.), Sanchez says he has no immediate plans to expand the brand stateside. *ALEXIS PETRIDIS*

"Demerit, demerit!"

SCHOOL DISCO.COM THE ESSENTIAL TRACKS! >>>>>

TIFFANY
I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW
In 1987, they sniffed derisively at this denim-clad mall rat. Now, her debut single sounds as spunky as soft-serve ice cream.

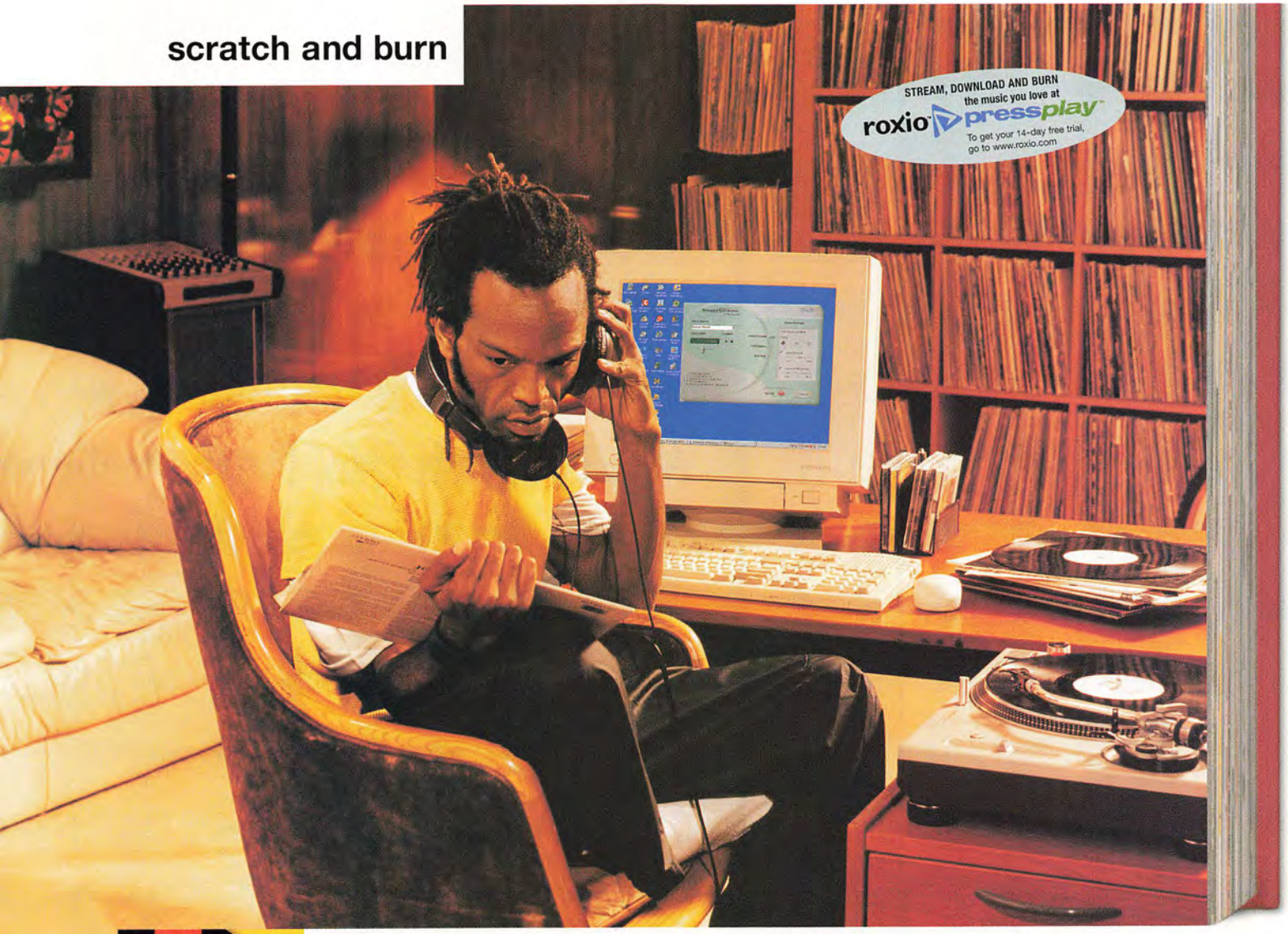
DURAN DURAN
GIRLS ON FILM
Again, edgier than memories suggest. It could've just been made by a trendy New York band beloved of Manhattan fashionistas.

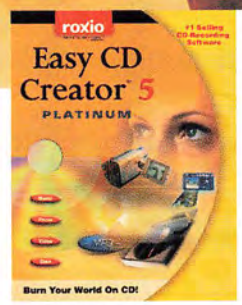
PRATT AND McCLAIN WITH BROTHERLOVE
HAPPY DAYS
This effervescent sitcom theme remains a cheerily insipid joy you can dance to.

SALT-N-PEPA
PUSH IT
Who woulda thunk it? Chart-chasing pop-rap *does* in fact age a good deal better than underground hip-hop after all. *ALEXIS PETRIDIS*

Zach Cordner (What's in Your Bag?, 5); Musicpictures.com/Retna Ltd. (British School Disco.com, 2); Bottom row, from left: Lynn Goldsmith, Michael Putland/Retna; the Kobal Collection; Janette Beckman/Retna Ltd.

scratch and burn





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Wham!

Is George Michael's career over?

GEORGE MICHAEL'S CAREER appears to be in free-fall after his controversial single "Shoot the Dog" entered the U.K. singles charts at a lowly number 12. The failure of the song, which criticizes Britain's government for aligning itself too closely with America's, has prompted widespread rumors that Michael might be about to get Wham! back together.

"Shoot the Dog" sold so poorly that the *Sun*, a British tabloid, began running daily reports on how far down the toilet Michael's career was sinking — accompanied by an image of the star stuffed inside the bowl of one.

"These days you have to go straight into the Top 3 to register in Britain," says Mark Frith, editor of *Heat* magazine, Britain's equivalent of *People*. "That single probably sold only around 15,000 [copies] its first week — and this is someone whose singles used to sell hundreds of thousands of copies."

As for that possible Wham! reunion? "He's not ruling it out," Frith says. "He had a party a few weeks ago, and he invited Andrew [Ridgeley, the other member of the band]. As far as we [know], it's the first time he's seen Andrew in several years. So there are murmurs it's going to happen. I really wouldn't be surprised."

Michael was unavailable to comment on the speculation. *CLARK COLLIS*

Scene from Michael's "Shoot the Dog"

Obits

MICHAEL HOUSER
40, August 10, in Athens, Georgia, of pancreatic cancer. Guitarist and founding member of Georgia jam band Widespread Panic. Houser announced that he had cancer a month before his death.

DAVE WILLIAMS
30, August 14, in Manassas, Virginia. Singer for Dallas quartet and Ozzfest main-stage attraction Drowning Pool, whose hit "Bodies" was recently included on the soundtrack to the movie *XXX*.

ALAN LOMAX
87, July 19, in Safety Harbor, Florida, of a heart attack. Musicologist who taped performances by Woody Guthrie, Jelly Roll Morton and Muddy Waters in extensive field recording sessions, two of which appear on the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack.

GUS DUDGEON
59, July 21, in Berkshire, England, in a car accident. English rock producer whose credits included David Bowie's "Space Oddity" and Elton John's "Your Song," "Rocket Man," "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" and "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me."

ROSCO GORDON
74, July 11, in Queens, New York, of a heart attack. Blues singer whose hits included "Just a Little Bit," later recorded by both Elvis Presley and the Beatles.

★ In the Studio

"A Lot Harder!"

That's how Sum 41 describe their follow-up to *All Killer No Filler*

★ "PAIN & PLEASURE is one group, and Sum 41 is another," explains Deryck Whibley, frontman of the latter — and of the former. Pain & Pleasure is an alter ego created to help the Sums churn out their next album.

"They hate each other," the baby-faced, porcupine-coifed singer continues, explaining the relationship between the platinum-selling punk-pop quartet and its Spinal Tap–esque creation. "Pain & Pleasure is an early-'80s British metal band — up until now they've written only one song, and they release it over and over. They're the only metal band from Manchester." So naturally . . . "They have a beef with Oasis."

Whibley, 22, and his three fellow Canadians (guitarist Dave Baksh, 22, bassist Cone McCaslin, 22, and drummer Steve Jocz, 21) have decamped to Avatar Studios in Manhattan to record their second album, as yet untitled. They've also come "to get a free month's vacation in New York City," the singer notes. "We come in around noon, and we watch *E! True Hollywood Stories* — we've learned a lot about the lives of Chris Farley and Sam Kinison."

Even so, Sum 41 have recorded 19 basic tracks for a tentative November release. Two songs from the album indicate classic metal influences: "Mr. Amsterdam," a galloping tune that's reminiscent of *. . . And Justice for All*–era Metallica, and "Hellsong," a grim riff-rocker about "one of my best friends. She just found out she has HIV. It's the biggest thing that has ever happened to our group of friends."

As for concerns that Pain & Pleasure will become Mr. Hyde to Sum 41's Dr. Jekyll and take over the group's good nature, Whibley notes that anything is possible. "The album sounds a lot harder," he says, grinning. "A lot." *ROB KEMP*

ALSO IN THE STUDIO >>>>>

OutKast: One is surely secure in his masculinity.

Genre-defying hip-hop duo **OUTKAST** are recording the follow-up to 2000's triple-platinum *Stankonia* at their Atlanta studio — also called Stankonia. A release is expected early next year.

Makeup-slathered nü-metal foursome **MUDVAYNE** are recording their second album at Pachyderm Studios in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, with Tool/Silverchair producer David Bottrill. It's due out November 19.

Ex-Pavement frontman **STEPHEN MALKMUS** is recording his second solo album with the Jicks, his backing band, at Bear Creek Studios in Seattle. The record is expected in early 2003.

American dancehall MC **SHAGGY** is working on the follow-up to 2000's six-times-platinum *Hotshot* at his home studio in Valley Stream, New York, for an early November release.

Clockwise from top left: Allaction.co.uk/Retna Ltd.; Pieter M. Van Hattem; Lillian Bonomo/Retna

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U2 Crunched!

On the eve of the release of *U2: The Best of 1990–2000*, guitarist the Edge gets misty as he reflects on *Blender*'s data about the band's exploits since 1990. . . .

1 Number of shows missed by a band member due to a hangover
Adam Clayton, Sydney, Australia, November 26, 1993
"We were very pissed off, but concerned for him. His bass tech stood in; for a while, no one knew it wasn't Adam. It's the only show since 1978 that somebody has missed."

2 Personas Bono adopted on 1992–93's Zoo TV tour
The Fly, Macphisto
"We were working on this demented song, 'The Fly.' Bono had always written from a personal perspective, but with this song, he developed an interest in alter egos. There's a great freedom when you're inhabiting a character."

Bono: The Fly!

3 Blissful months the Edge has been married to former Zoo TV belly dancer Morleigh Steinberg
"She and I took a boat around Corsica for our honeymoon. No faxes, no phones, no computers."

5 Surprisingly small number of shows U2 played in Asia during the '90s
All in Japan
"If you're traveling vast distances with air freight, it's not viable. We don't do shows if it costs us money to play. You don't want to go someplace for the first time and show up with two speakers and a light bulb. The people might be like, 'Cheapskates!' "

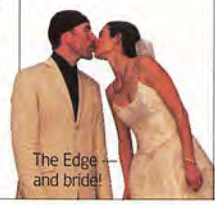
7 Top chart position for Clayton and drummer Larry Mullen's "Theme to *Mission: Impossible*" — higher than any U2 single in the '90s
"The next time we're struggling, I'll remember we just need to do more instrumentals for Tom Cruise movies."

The Grammies: a high!

10 Grammy Awards U2 have won since 1990
"Grammys mean more to us now than they did in the '80s. To come back with *All That You Can't Leave Behind* and win more awards than we did with *The Joshua Tree* is a real thrill."

11 Words in the U2 song with the longest title
"Alex Descends Into Hell for a Bottle of Milk/Korova 1," the B-side to "The Fly"
"Bono and I wrote it for a stage production of *A Clockwork Orange*. It was one of the first things we did in the decade, and our first experiment with sampling. It was about putting rock & roll in a blender."

12 Children the four U2 members have among them
"I have five. Being the most prolific member of U2, I'm well over my quota."


The Edge — and bride!

109.7
Revenue, in millions of dollars, of 2001's Elevation tour, the second most lucrative tour ever
"It wasn't the big extravaganza that the Zoo TV or PopMart tours were, so we definitely came back with more cash in the bank." *ROB KEMP*

Bono: mid-rhyme!

★ Weird Band Alert!

Max Q

Can NASA astronauts rock? Yes, they can!

Max who?
Max Q. A self-described "easy rock" band formed 15 years ago by six NASA astronauts. All of the current six members of the band have flown aboard the Space Shuttle — lead guitarist Stephen "Stevie Ray" Robinson even went 3.6 million miles on the famous 1997 mission on which septuagenarian Senator John Glenn was a passenger!

Bet they play a seriously kick-ass version of David Bowie's "Space Oddity," huh?
Uh, no, actually, they don't. But the lyrics to one of their original compositions, "Another Saturday Night," go like this: "Another sunrise, another sunset, another orbit, another day out of this world/I got devotion. I got emotion. I got the universe/Now all I need is my girl."

Max Q: No, no — they're not *from* outer space, they go *into* it. (You think aliens would dress like this?)

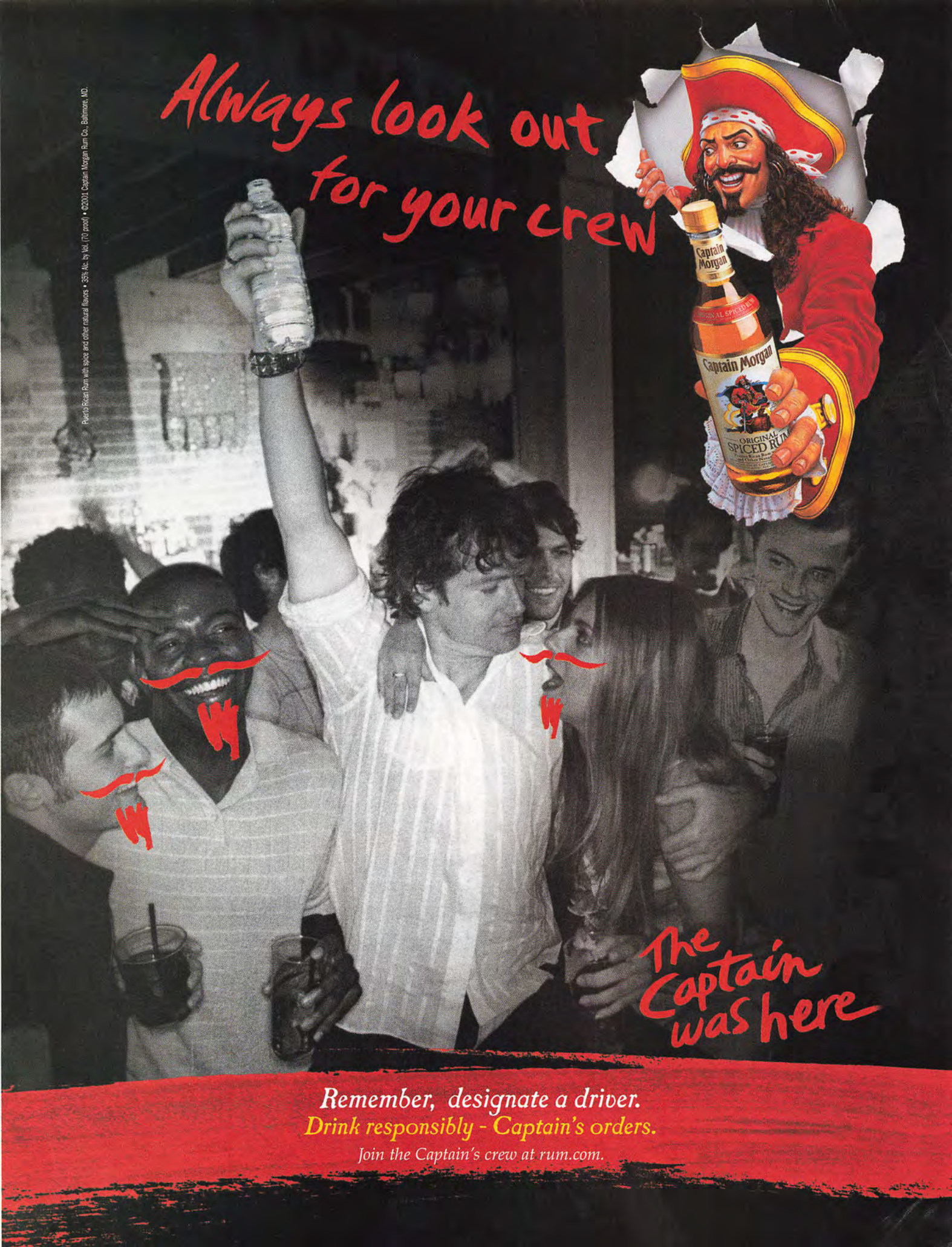
Does "Max Q" refer to the term that describes when the Space Shuttle experiences maximum air pressure 45 seconds after it takes off, by any chance?
Why, yes, it does! *STEVE KNOPPER*

Shakira: "I just checked online: You like me, you really like me!"

BLENDER READERS' POLL RESULTS!

WHO WON? Well, in a way, we all won. (Hooray!) But, in another sense — a democratic one — a whole bunch of your favorite stars won. (Double hooray!) Thanks to your votes, we all now know the best music to make sweet, sweet love to, who the sexiest star is and whether or not bass solos are a good thing. To find out what you, our readers, think of R. Kelly, J.Lo, Ozzy Osbourne, Linkin Park, Shakira and a host of others, go to blender.com. Now. *Hurry!*

U2 Crunched!, clockwise from top left: Bauer-Griffin/Visual/Zuma Press/Newscom; Anton Corbijn; Jay Blakesberg/Retna Ltd.; Bauer-Griffin/Visual/Zuma Press/Newscom; Kevin Mazur/LFI; Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis. Weird Band Alert!: from left: Adastra Taxi/Getty Images; courtesy of NASA. Tammie Arroyo/AFP/Retna Ltd. (Shakira)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Ask Blender

SOLVING YOUR POP CONUNDRUMS SINCE 2001

On air clarinet: Bobby McFerrin!

I heard a rumor that Bobby "Don't Worry, Be Happy" McFerrin committed suicide shortly after he had his big hit. Is that true?

STEVE LENDER, SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

No, no, no! This sick urban legend went around in the early '90s, but McFerrin, thankfully, has spent the years since his 1988 smash collaborating with the likes of jazz pianist Chick Corea. In May, he received the George Peabody Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Music in America, a distinction he shares with Leonard Bernstein, Benny Goodman, Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson. Don't worry, he's happy.

What's the longest song anyone has ever recorded?

KEVIN "A-GADDA-DA-VIDA" WELDT MORTON GROVE, ILLINOIS

Remember the Waitresses, those sub-Blondie new-wavers whose "Christmas Wrapping" is on all those holiday compilations? In 1997, their chief songwriter, Chris Butler, released a 69-minute epic, "The Devil Glitch," breaking the Guinness World Record and boasting more than 500 verses with no instrumental breaks.

Butler recorded "Glitch" on acoustic guitar in one take, then broke it into three-to-five-minute chunks for accompaniment by Waitresses saxophonist Mars Williams, singer Freedy Johnston, Butler's mom and other collaborators, before assembling the scraps. "Friends have e-mailed me," Butler says, "and said, 'I don't know if I like it, but when I listen to it, I feel better.' "

Did William S. Burroughs really coin the term *heavy metal* in his book *Naked Lunch*? I just finished reading it and didn't notice it.

JARED HOLMES, COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Right writer, wrong book. The genre's name is often incorrectly credited to *Naked Lunch,* Burroughs's druggy 1959 Beat novel — which did feature a dildo that supplied the name for Steely Dan (see box). "Heavy metal" came in 1961, in Burroughs's *The Soft Machine,* which featured a character named Uranian Willy, the Heavy Metal Kid.

Burroughs is thought to have derived the term from the heavy metal poisons he used as a bug exterminator. Steppenwolf's 1968 hit "Born to Be Wild," with its reference to "heavy metal thunder," introduced it to pop music, and the writer Lester Bangs branded "heavy metal" on the strain of hard rock emerging in the early 1970s.

Chevy Chase's "I can sing and drink beer at the same time" gag delighted millions who couldn't.

"They knew I could deal with the audience.

I go back a long way with Steely Dan, and some guy at work just told me Chevy Chase used to play drums for them! Did he?

NICOLE JAFFE, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Technically, no, but the future *Saturday Night Live* comic did play drums in early incarnations of the band, featuring fellow Bard College students Donald Fagen and Walter Becker, who formed early bands for party gigs with names like the Leather Canary and the Bad Rock Group.

Chase left the act, and recently said that Becker and Fagen had begged him back: "They especially wanted me onstage when they toured, because they were so shy with stage fright. They knew I could deal with the audience." Chase later sang on *The Chevy Chase Show,* a 1993 late-night program that lasted six weeks.

I've heard about a punk-rock group that somehow used to make fans throw up and pass out. Who was this? Can music seriously do that?

DAVID HAFEZ, GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

Throbbing Gristle fans request a headache.

Not everyone threw up and passed out at gigs by Throbbing Gristle, a late-'70s British industrial rock group, but usually audiences left feeling pretty woozy. The band used to spice up its performances with subsonic and ultrasonic frequencies made by old military equipment.

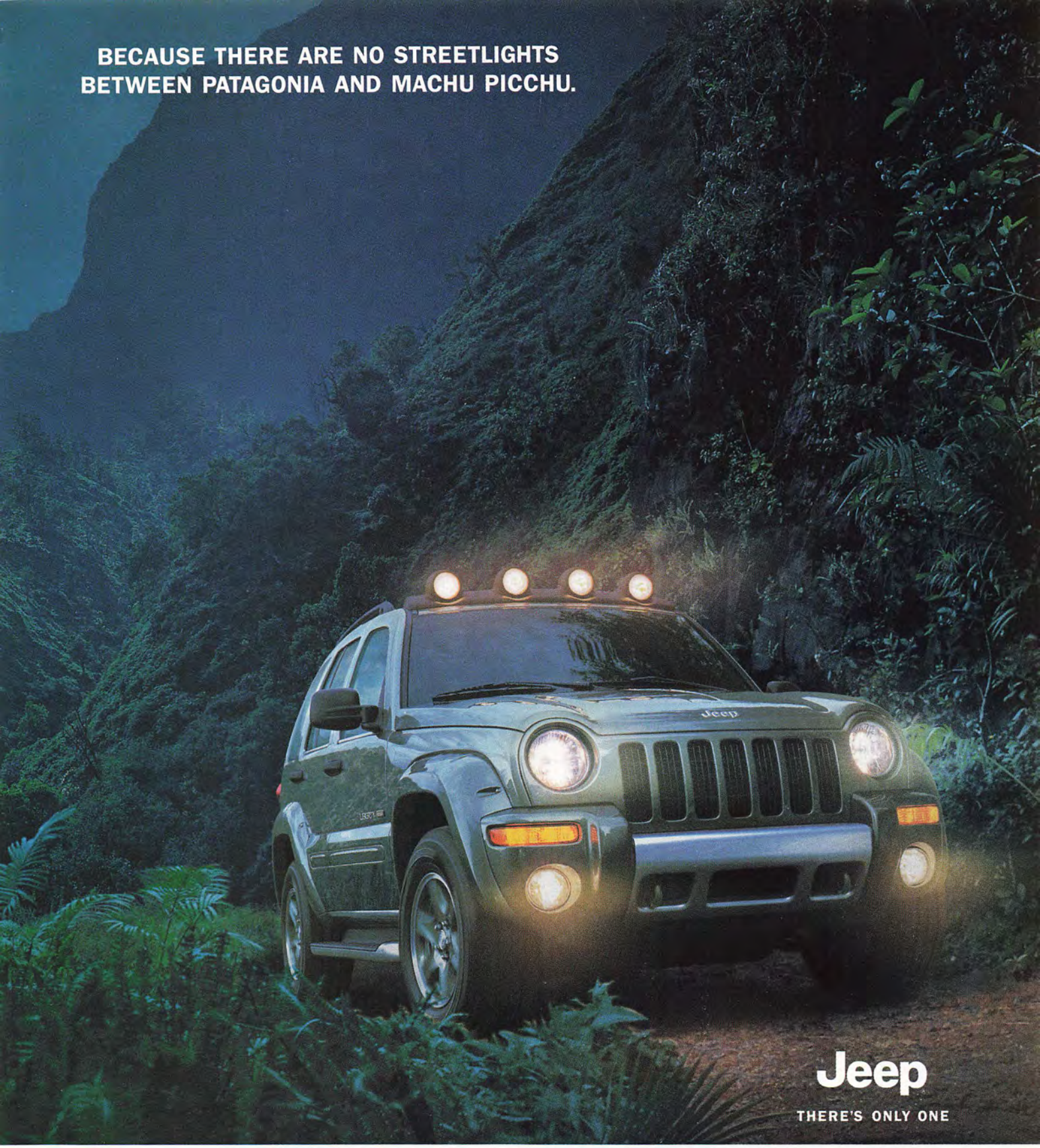
Throbbing Gristle also — in the name of research, of course — generated unsettling sounds in a London park near their studio; some bystanders seemed oblivious, while others became distracted and confused, and dogs howled. "You can make people vomit with certain frequencies," notes ex-Gristle Chris Carter. [BLENDER]

YOUR QUESTIONS

Ask Blender, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018

E-mail: askblender@blender.com

Clockwise from top left: Roger Ressmeyer/Corbis; Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis; Michael Ochs Archives.com



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Superstar

A sex-starved groupie pines for her rock & roll hero, and Richard Carpenter detects a smash hit for his sister, Karen, to sing. **The Carpenters'** surprisingly dirty ditty would enthrall everyone from Luther Vandross to Sonic Youth. . . .

RICHARD CARPENTER has a very clear memory of the first time he heard "Superstar." "I'd come home from recording one night and turned on *The Tonight Show*. Johnny Carson had Bette Midler as a guest, before she was a household name, and she sang 'Superstar.' She sang it more as a modern-day torch song, but the song really caught my ear."

Why he immediately decided it was perfect for the Carpenters is just one mystery surrounding "Superstar," given that its central theme — a groupie yearning for one more tryst with a rock star who's left town — would have been considered exceedingly risqué in those days, especially when sung by an artist as apple-pie wholesome as Karen Carpenter.

However, with the passage of time and the tragic circumstances of Karen's 1983 death from anorexia, it's become apparent that the Carpenters' appeal was no simple thing, and certainly not limited to mainstream America. Acoustic slowcore guru Mark Eitzel, one of many alternative rockers who contributed a track to the 1994 tribute album *If I Were a Carpenter*, observes that the Carpenters' "pastel, chicks-and-puppies aspect is undercut with a traumatic kind of thing."

Although the song is credited as a collaboration between Leon Russell and Bonnie Bramlett, "Superstar" actually began with Rita Coolidge. Russell has acknowledged that Coolidge gave him the title and the basic idea for a groupie/rock star lyric. Which rock star? Eric Clapton, Coolidge has said: "He was the only guitar player we knew at the time."

Coolidge knew Clapton from having sung backup vocals on his 1970 solo debut, and shortly after, she played with Bramlett and Russell on Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs and Englishmen tour, a legendarily debauched U.S. jaunt whose backstage amusements have been described by the drummer Jim Keltner: "Sharing girls. Screwing every chick in sight. Most were there for that purpose. The drugs were just as easy to get."

It was in this period that Coolidge's idea found its way to Russell and Bramlett, who turned the initial concept into a finished song. "Although Rita did not write on the song," Bramlett says, "without her help, it would not have gotten done. She sat and sang harmony so I could build parts. I can't tell you what the other writers were thinking of, but as far as I was concerned, it was the lament of a groupie. Hence its co-title, 'Groupie Song.' Now, it's about whomever the listener wants it to be about. The point is, he's not there and he probably will never come back for her. But because she's still singing it, she still has hope."

It was during the Mad Dogs mayhem that Coolidge first performed the song before an audience, and her soulful version appears on *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, the tour's live album.

Richard Carpenter didn't see the Joe Cocker tour, but when he heard "Superstar" on *The Tonight Show*, he loved it: "I thought it was a hit, no two ways about it." He immediately presented the song to Karen, whose initial resistance to recording it surprised him. "It was one of the very few tunes that Karen ever questioned me on," Richard has said. "Usually our tastes were the same, and I thought she'd just go crazy over this, but she didn't. So I asked her to indulge me and sing it and listen to it as it was being put together."

It would have been hard for Karen to find much fault with the track, given that it employed the talents of veteran players from the Wrecking Crew, the West Coast's top session pool, whose credits ran from Elvis Presley through the

VITAL STATISTICS

SONG
"Superstar"

ARTIST
The Carpenters

LABEL
A&M

PERFORMERS
Karen Carpenter
lead vocals
Richard Carpenter
piano, vocals
Hal Blaine
drums
Joe Osborn
bass
Jim Horn
wind instruments
Bob Messenger
bass and wind instruments
Doug Strawn
wind instruments

PRODUCERS
Richard Carpenter, Jack Daugherty

RELEASED
September 1971

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
2

WHO'S WHO?

RICHARD CARPENTER
Squeaky-clean producer. Remains in his late sister's shadow. Won't discuss "Superstar" or Karen today.

BONNIE BRAMLETT
Half of Southern rock's Delaney and Bonnie. Friend of Eric Clapton; often blamed for Blind Faith's demise.

RITA COOLIDGE
Singer-songwriter. "Delta Lady" of Joe Cocker's hit song and wife of Kris Kristofferson. Won't discuss her role in writing "Superstar."

LEON RUSSELL
Sessioneer extraordinaire whose keyboards graced scores of '60s hits. Still tours, records and runs his own label today.

This page, clockwise from top left: Alphonse Roy/Iconic Stills-Ltd., 2), Glenn A. Baker/Retna Ltd., Neal Preston/Corbis, Henry Diltz/Corbis. (F) Opposite page, clockwise from left: Neal Peters Collection, Fotos International/Getty Images, Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Look, Ma! No cavities! Karen and Richard always brushed and flossed twice a day.

In the studio, 1972

"Who just yelled for 'Stairway'? Dude, I'll kick your ass!"

Beach Boys and virtually every hit ever produced by Phil Spector. As Karen listened, Richard has said, "She changed her mind. It became one of her favorites." Still, its origins with the Carpenters were inauspicious. Legend holds that the vocal take on the finished record was Karen's first run-through, and that she was reading the words off a napkin on which Richard had hastily scrawled them.

Given the prevailing societal attitudes of the day, Richard had felt it was necessary to make a slight alteration to the lyrics Bramlett and Russell had written. "We had to change only one word in the whole song," he said. "At that time, Top 40 radio in America would not have played something that said 'can hardly wait to sleep with you again.' So I changed it to 'be with you again.'"

I thought she'd just go crazy over this, but she didn't.

RICHARD CARPENTER, ON KAREN'S RESPONSE TO SONG

By the time "Superstar" was released as a single, the album it appears on, *Carpenters*, had sold a million copies in the U.S. The song became the Carpenters' fifth gold single, and Richard's backing-vocal arrangement soon scored him a Grammy nomination.

"Superstar" was neither the Carpenters' biggest hit nor their best-loved song. But although it's been covered many times — by artists as diverse as Luther Vandross, Cher and Sonic Youth — it has become indelibly associated with the Carpenters' myth, turning up on the soundtrack of the 1995 Chris Farley movie *Tommy Boy*, and in the title of *Superstar — The Karen Carpenter Story*, a 1987 biopic filmed by Todd Haynes with Barbie dolls instead of live actors. (Karen's estate successfully sued to prevent the film's release and distribution; it is almost never seen.)

"Songs like 'Superstar' have a very melancholy way of hanging this message on you," says Redd Kross's Steve McDonald, another contributor to *If I Were a Carpenter*. "[Karen] had a warm voice with an androgynous quality." *JOHNNY BLACK*

YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

Scott Stapp

Pull on your leather pants: The only tobacco-chewing, strip club–visiting, Fred Durst–baiting, God-worshiping single dad in rock is ready to take your questions!

BY CLARK COLLIS

★ "I'M A JOKESTER," says Scott Stapp, sitting in his dressing room backstage at Columbus, Ohio's Polaris Amphitheater. "I'm always cutting up and being crazy. But people think I sit around meditating all the time."

The Creed frontman has a point. Thanks to his Messianic video persona and Christian-themed lyrics, Stapp has developed a reputation as one of our more stone-faced, serious superstars. But before tonight's show, he's positively frisky as he reveals to *Blender* readers some surprising, bling-blingy indulgences.

"I'm actually building a new house right now," explains the 29-year-old Floridian between chomps on an enormous wad of chewing tobacco ("I had to stop smoking when we started doing shows every single night," he says). "I'm going to have some bookshelves that slide, and there'll be a secret room back there. My secret, no-one-knows-about-it room where I can do all my weird, crazy stuff. You may have to pull a book to open it. I haven't decided yet."

Anything else worth mentioning about the house?

"Not really," he says, smiling. "Except that it's going to look just like a castle!"

Hide behind the drapes all you like, Scott — it's still a mullet.

Dear Superstar

Got a question you're desperate to ask a superstar? Let *Blender* be your intermediary. Send your questions to us, and we'll put the smartest to the world's greatest music stars. Neat, huh?

Just check out blender.com for upcoming interviews. Then be sure to put your name and contact information on your question. Good luck!

Mail: Dear Superstar, Blender, 1040 6th Avenue, 22nd floor, New York, NY 10018
E-mail: superstar@blender.com

What were you doing at 2000's K-Rock concert in New Jersey that made Fred Durst say you were acting like "fucking Michael Jackson"?
Y2RALPH, MADISON, NEW JERSEY

I think I had sunglasses on. You know, the bottom line is that Fred was upset he wasn't headlining. When Fred is not the center of attention, he wants to draw attention to himself. He went into the cafeteria backstage, and they said, "Fred, it's time for you to start." He said, "I'm not done eating." He sat there for an hour and a half, and then went onstage and said what he said.

What Fred didn't realize is that he was talking about himself. Look at the position he's in now: He's an asshole; he's burned a lot of bridges. Nobody likes him, and you can't last too long in this business with that prima donna attitude. I mean, his guitarist left the band because Fred is such a cock. His day will come.

Durst has at least 30 pounds on you. Were you serious about challenging him to a boxing match?
PILLOWBITER, JUNO BEACH, FLORIDA

Oh, yeah. I thought Fred needed a butt-whipping. It doesn't matter how much he weighs. I'll knock his ass out cold. I've dropped guys way bigger than him.

I'm a 16-year-old girl who loves your music. But a friend told me that a lyric from your song "In America" takes a stand against a woman's right to choose ("Only in America we kill the unborn/To make ends meet"). I'll still like you guys, but I want to know where you stand on the issue.
MSPROGRESS, LAWRENCE, KANSAS

It's not my business to talk about it, because it's a woman's choice to do whatever she wants to do. But there are a lot of people in the world who can't have children. My manager is adopting his second child. When you see people who desperately want children and can't have them, that makes you angry.

Then you go to write, and that topic comes to mind — and you formulate an opinion for the moment. The opinion for the moment in that song was, don't do this. But at the end of the day, it's a woman's choice to do what she wants with her body, whether I agree with what she decides or not.

What's the strangest rumor you've ever heard about yourself?
TILC, BILLINGS, MONTANA

There have been a lot. That I'm Jim Morrison's son. That there's a woman somewhere whose five →

“It doesn’t matter how much Fred Durst weighs. I’ll knock his ass out cold.

kids I'm the father of. The oldest kid is 15, which would have made me 13 when I fathered him.

I'm going to Tallahassee, Florida, to visit some buddies of mine and was wondering if you could recommend any good strip clubs there.
UFEELMUSIC, BAYSHORE, NEW YORK

There are no strip clubs in Tallahassee. Miami has a lot. Tampa has a lot. I think Orlando has three or four. I don't really frequent strip clubs. We have been known to go to some, but never to meet women. Sometimes they're the only place the band can go if we want to have a drink. You're left alone, because the people there are interested in the women; the last thing they could care about is us. [Blender *points out that this sounds merely like an excuse to hang out with strippers.*] Hey, where we're at, meeting women is not exactly a problem. It's the quality of the women and what they want that you really have to worry about. But I can't lie and say that it's not nice to have the scenery around. [*Pauses*] You're not buying it, are you? Well, you're entitled to that, but it's the truth.

I read that you've recently been divorced. Are you on the prowl? And do you like redheads?
CMORTON, CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

I'm not, like, actively seeking a woman right now. But if the right one came along, I'd be interested. I have no real preference. Any beautiful woman will do. Redhead, brunette, blonde. I'm a virile man who's interested in women. But I'm also the father of a 3 1/2-year-old, so it's definitely a tricky situation, because I don't want to expose him to the dating process. I don't want girls to try to win me by playing to my child. So when I do date, they'll never meet my son.

Stapp ignores photographer, irritatingly short length of chaise longue

Playgirl: We buy it only for the articles!

Who's hotter: Pink or Britney Spears?
TWRIGHT, JACKSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Britney Spears. She works out at the gym I trained at last year. She is a very, very beautiful woman. I would definitely be interested in dating her if she were available. She's a very, very attractive woman. I hear we have similar backgrounds, too. I hear she comes from a real strong religious home. Aside from that, she's tasty.

Fred Durst prepares to clean his ears.

Have you kept in touch with your old bassist, Brian Marshall?
JOJO, CORVALLIS, WASHINGTON

I made an attempt, but no. The reasons why . . . I just feel, out of friendship for Brian, that they're not discussed. Brian was a good friend for a long time, and he definitely gave something to our first and second records. But out of respect for him, I don't want to give any details on that.

Lil' Scotty-wotty

Years ago the Grateful Dead sponsored the Lithuanian national basketball team. Would Creed consider sponsoring the Pleasant Hill Junior High wrestling team?
DAN, PLEASANT HILL, OREGON

We'd have to go check them out, to see if they're good. Ask [guitarist] Mark [Tremonti]; he's a big wrestling fan. I mean, sure, we'll sponsor them. Have them send us their stuff.

Would you ever pose for *Playgirl*?
DONNA-S, GLENDORA, CALIFORNIA

Uh, I don't think they'd want me to pose. But I don't think I would. I wouldn't want to scare anybody.

Do you think that Ozzy Osbourne is a good father?
TINAG, PORTLAND, OREGON

I think Ozzy does the best he can. He loves his kids, and he's a good dad. Who's to judge? He's there for his kids, he's interested in their lives and he does what he can do. That's all you can ask for. He's a lot more there than people think.

How can I keep leather pants from chafing in hot weather?
CREEDFAN, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

I've never had a problem with chafing. But I wear them only when I do shows or if I'm doing a photo shoot. I find that the real thin ones are a lot more comfortable, and they breathe a little bit.

David Lee Roth or Sammy Hagar?
VHROOLZ, LARCHMONT, NEW YORK

If you want to go with when Van Halen were at the height of their success, you go with Hagar. They had more hits and sold more records with Hagar than with Roth. But there was something about Roth that made it cool. That's a tough one. You know what? I can't make that choice.

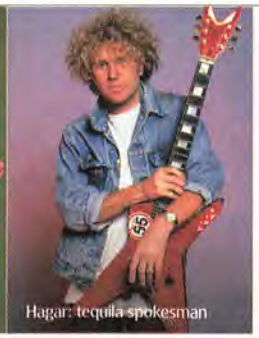
I know you're an avid golfer. I keep topping the ball. Any suggestions?
LHODGMAN, PROVINCETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

You're pulling your head up. Stay down through the ball and then come up. Don't look where the ball's going until your body forces your head to turn. Keep your eye on the ball and hit it, and your head will naturally turn.

Do you think it's ironic that there's so much religious imagery in your lyrics, given that you rebelled against your strict Christian upbringing?
GINAC, GROSSE POINTE, MICHIGAN

I think it's only natural that how you paint pictures with words would be based on your background and →

Roth: outspoken

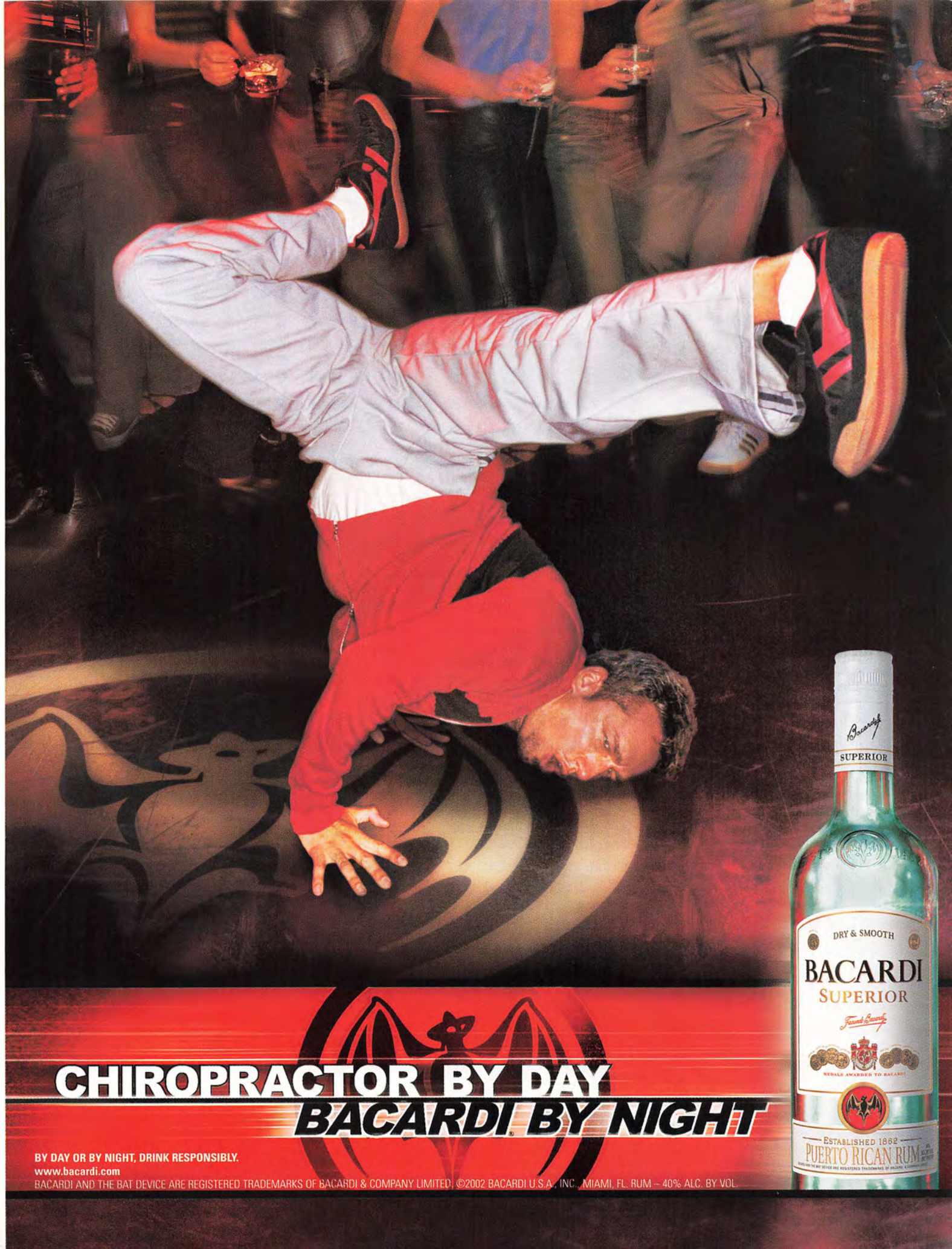


Hagar: tequila spokesman

Creed in 2000, from left: ex-bassist Brian Marshall, Stapp, guitarist Mark Tremonti, drummer Scott Phillips

I would be interested in dating Britney Spears.

Opening spread: Peter Ross (2). This page, clockwise from top: Peter Ross; Anthony Dixon/London Features; John McMurtrie/Retna UK; Ross Marino/Retna Ltd. USA; Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis; Classmates.com; Alphonse Telymonde (still-life)



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what you're exposed to. Since I was brought up in the church, it's only natural that there would be religious imagery in my lyrics. It's a great resource. All the stories that are ever going to be told are in the Bible, and they're told in a real dramatic, demonstrative way. If you're a writer, even if you don't believe, it's a good book to read.

Do you have a favorite Bible story?
MARY 1975, CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

When I was a kid, I liked David and Goliath: the guy who wasn't supposed to win going against all odds and defeating the big bad guy. Creed's like that. We were the small band from nowhere, and everybody passed on us. Then we had all this success and changed the way radio stations program, the way MTV programs, the way companies sign bands. We've changed the whole landscape of music since 1997. We're the little engine that could.

When did you last get really drunk?
SHARKEY, STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

About two weeks ago. Before that, probably two or three months. I'm not a big drinker. Occasionally I'll go out and have some drinks, and once in a blue moon, someone starts doing shots, and next thing you know, you're plastered. I'm a happy drunk. I'll be all, "I love you. . . . " But if there's trouble, I'm the first one to get into it.

You're part Cherokee. When you did psychedelic drugs, did you ever see your spirit guide?
MYSTICRHYTHMS, TORONTO

I definitely feel we all have a spirit guide or an angel or some presence that is with us. I saw a lot of things when I experimented with psychedelics. *A lot of things.* It was very intense. I would actually have to leave the people I was with and go out in the woods by myself to deal with what was going on, with what the psychedelics were doing to me. A lot of it was very spiritual. Sometimes good and sometimes bad. But it was stuff I had to confront — and now I'm glad that's out of the way.

"Dear Scott: I'd love to see you photographed next to a big stick. . . ."

Eminem: unwelcome at chez Stapp

David "gets Biblical" on Goliath's ass.

If your son, Jagger, wanted to buy Eminem's new CD, *The Eminem Show*, would you let him?
PELLEGRINO, RIVERDALE, NEW YORK

No. Absolutely not. Parents have a responsibility to make decisions about what they want their children to hear. You get only one shot at being a parent, and you have to do what you think is right. Nothing against Eminem on a personal level or against the way he expresses himself, but I wouldn't want my son listening to him.

Creed were originally called Naked Toddler. What in the hell were you guys thinking?
JASONP, CHICAGO

Mark had a name that he proposed to the band. He just liked the sound of it; he thought it was cool. I started thinking about it on a deeper level, and it was about exposing yourself, opening your soul, opening your heart and being honest and sincere. I mean, nakedness . . . you can't hide anything at all.

That was kind of an underlying theme of the band since day one. We wanted to be real. I wanted to talk about and write about things that hadn't been written about before. I wanted to express emotions that I felt other artists were afraid to talk about, that other men were afraid to talk about. We changed the name, but it did have some symbolic meaning to us. It was where we were at the time.

What is being chanted at the start of *Weathered*'s "Who's Got My Back"?
TAKEMEHIGHER, NEW ORLEANS

It's a prayer song performed by a Cherokee Indian named Bo Taylor. There are no real lyrics or definition to what is being sung. The ancient chants that the Cherokee Indians did were more about a feeling or a mood. It's almost like crying out to a higher being or god.

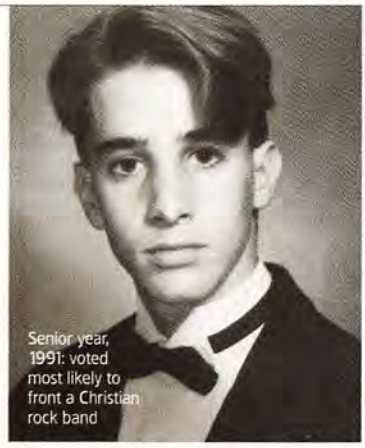
What lyric of yours are you most proud of?
SCOTTSHOT, BLUEBELL, PENNSYLVANIA

I never really sit down and think about them that way. [*Long pause*] Oh, man. I don't know that I'm the most proud of any one particular lyric. I know that I take a lot of time and do a lot of soul-searching when I write every song. Nothing's just thrown in there. Sometimes it's five seconds. Sometimes it's five weeks. It just depends how in tune I am with what I'm trying to say.

Do you ever think about what you're going to do after Creed?
DAWNF, LAS VEGAS

Yeah. I wouldn't be human if I didn't. I think too much as it is, so it's only par for the course for me to think years down the road. What would I do? I'd probably still want to stay involved with writing, maybe write a book or focus on my poetry. The thing is, we're past the point of no return of blending in without everyone recognizing us. Becoming a librarian is not really an option for me anymore. [BLENDER]

Salt Lake ditty: Creed perform at the 2002 Winter Olympics



Senior year, 1991: voted most likely to front a Christian rock band

If there's trouble, I'm the first one to get into it.

Clockwise from top: Chris Buck; Classmates.com; LP/WireImage.com; FotoFantasies

THERE'S NOTHING MOTHERLY ABOUT MOTHER NATURE. EXCEPT MAYBE HER BIG MOUNTAINOUS BREASTS.

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- Chairman Gert Boyle

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Beck prepares to drench the photographer with his trusty "squirty blossom."

The Heartbreak Kid

It's been a difficult couple of years for **Beck**: He's split with two members of his band, his longtime manager and, most devastating of all, his girlfriend of nine years. The result: his most emotionally naked album. "I like being in peril," he tells *Blender*

BY DORIAN LYNSKEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PEGGY SIROTA

SUIT JACKET BY **VERONIQUE BRANQUINTO**; PANTS BY **ALICE ROI**; SHIRT AND SHOES BLOCK'S OWN

IN JUNE 2000, three weeks before he turned 30, Beck Hansen separated from costume designer Leigh Limon, his girlfriend of nine years. He met her when he was an unknown on the Los Angeles punk scene, long before "Loser," *Odelay* and his iconic status as pop culture's most celebrated magpie. He turned up to his thirtieth birthday party a single man.

In the following months, further upheavals set the Los Angeles rumor mill churning. First he was linked with Winona Ryder. More significantly, he parted company with his longtime manager, John Silva, as well as regular band members Smokey Hormel and Joey Waronker. Then a comment by his bassist, Justin Meldal-Johnsen, triggered speculation that Beck (who was raised Jewish) had converted to the controversial Church of Scientology, with which his father, David Campbell, has connections.

This month Beck releases his seventh album, *Sea Change*, a collection of gorgeous, downbeat and unusually direct songs full of confusion and loss. One track, the country-flavored "Guess I'm Doing Fine," runs: "It's only lies that I'm livin'/It's only tears that I'm cryin'/It's only you that I'm losin'/I guess I'm doing fine." Another, "Lost Cause," sighs: "I'm tired of fighting for a lost cause."

Some might infer a connection between Beck's music and recent events in his private life. Beck, however, is not one of them.

"Um, yeah," he says slowly. "It's a thing that everybody goes through. Those breakup moments. Y'know."

We're in a grand, old-fashioned steakhouse in downtown L.A., the kind that offers artery-jamming food at wallet-emptying prices. Beck is sawing away at a plate of lamb chops and looking unhappy at the direction the interview has taken.

Listeners will naturally assume that some of these songs are about Leigh Limon. Were they written after you separated?

"Er, a little before . . . after, but before. I don't know. [*Sarcastically*] I'll send you the dates. I have them written down on my calendar at home."

Has she heard these songs yet?

"No. [The album] hasn't come out."

We know. We meant, are the two of you still in touch?

His voice goes quiet, his mood arctic. "That's none of your business."

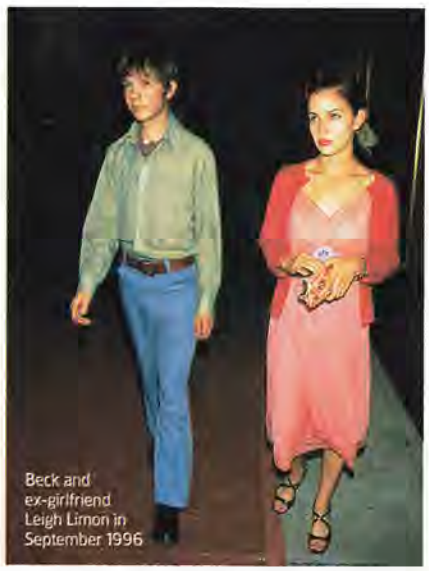
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THESE ARE confessional times. We know in graphic detail about the troubled childhood of Staind's Aaron Lewis, we know that Papa Roach's Jacoby Shaddix wet the bed until he was 16 and we know almost as much about the twists and turns of Eminem's family life as we do about our own.

Beck is different. He'll talk at length about perfecting a specific string sound, but quizzing him about any aspect of his personal life is like wrestling a shadow. He interrupts, misunderstands, sidesteps or just plain ignores countless questions. He must be the only American songwriter since Bob Dylan to write a beautifully moving heartbreak record, then seem perplexed, even annoyed, that anyone might actually be interested in the heartbreak behind it.

"Somebody else is satisfied by Bentleys. I'm satisfied by a beautiful string arrangement."

Then again, Beck has always specialized in mixed messages. He arrives at the restaurant with his rail-thin frame wrapped in a torn, faded, blue-and-white striped sweater and topped with a tangled mop of hair. At first glance he looks goofy and ageless, with the soft, open face of someone 10, maybe 20, years younger, almost too young to shave. But his ice-blue eyes and the smirk that plays around his lips betray a steely, biting intelligence. Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore once described him as "a zombie fawn guided by a translucent face with sci-fi eyes."



Beck and ex-girlfriend Leigh Limon in September 1996

You can see what Moore was getting at. When you retrace Beck's career, it reads like an guidebook to not getting pinned down. After the surrealist blues-pop of "Loser" shot him from obscurity in 1993, he released three albums in one year: a chaotic punk set (*Stereopathetic Soulmanure*), a clutch of hushed folk songs (*One Foot in the Grave*) and a boundary-busting hybrid of country, pop, hip-hop and psychedelia (*Mellow Gold*).

He's followed an equally wayward path since. On 1996's *Odelay*, he advanced *Mellow Gold*'s genre-tampering with 2 million–selling, Grammy-winning results, only then to deke fans with the subtle, lo-fi *Mutations* (1998) and the technicolor R&B maneuvers of *Midnite Vultures* (1999). As a cultural figure, if not a chart force, his ability to flip the script ingeniously with each successive album has made him the heir to 1970s David Bowie or 1980s Prince.

"I respect musicians who put out the same record over and over again and develop something. I do. You know, my grandfather [Al Hansen] was an artist, and in the early '60s he started doing images of the Venus figure. He spent 35 years doing that figure over and over and over. He explored every aspect of what that figure could do and every material you could apply to it, and there's something beautiful about that. But I just decided to cast my net a bit wider. Maybe I won't catch as much."

To the outsider, Beck's career is like a jigsaw puzzle — and he's withholding half the pieces. He has been habitually misunderstood ever since critics inaccurately dubbed "Loser" a "slacker anthem" (in fact, Beck's industriousness verges on the workaholic). It happened with *Midnite Vultures*, a horny love letter to commercial R&B but also a slippery satire on the glossy excesses of late-'90s culture. Aware that it was a "weird record," Beck originally planned to release it as his jiggy alter ego, Surrealius, but decided to use his own name. It sold half as much as *Odelay* and left many listeners wondering what, beneath its chilly, polished surface, Beck was trying to say. Where does a playful grin become a knowing smirk?

"I didn't spell it out," he concedes with a sigh. "There was a certain ambiguity, going into that nether zone of meaning or non-meaning. Is it sincere or not? Is it funny or is it just stupid? I enjoy that. I like being in peril. You're not playing it safe. You're not saying, 'I'm Eminem and I come from here and this is what happened to me and this is how I see the world, in big block letters. But we don't live in subtle times culturally."

He admits in retrospect that *Midnite Vultures* was a deliberately perverse move. "I was at a point that I felt an urge to . . . waste it a bit. Do some things you're not supposed to do, say some things you're not supposed to say."

If Beck is at all concerned about how his commercial and critical stock has dipped since, he hides it well. →

Styling: Lauren Ehrenfeld for Celestine; grooming: Roz Music for Magnet. This page: Kevin Mazur/LFI

"Now where the hell did I put that flower?"

They Probably Think This Song Is About Them . . .

→ . . . And they're right! Beck's ex-girlfriend Leigh Limon is but the latest heartbreaker to inspire an entire album's worth of bruised and battered laments

ROSANNA ARQUETTE

The heartrending allure of the *Desperately Seeking Susan* actress was first set to music in 1982's "Rosanna," by Toto, whose keyboardist, **Steve Porcaro**, had loved and lost her. Soon, Arquette was consoling the recently divorced **Peter Gabriel**, whose 1992 album *Us* documents the agonies of that affair's demise.

SARA LOWNDES

Bob Dylan's bitter separation from this former model after eight years of marriage fueled such songs as "You're a Big Girl Now," on his 1974 comeback album *Blood on the Tracks*. Told how much fans liked it, Dylan said, "It's hard for me to relate to that — people enjoying that type of pain."

FRANCES TOMELTY

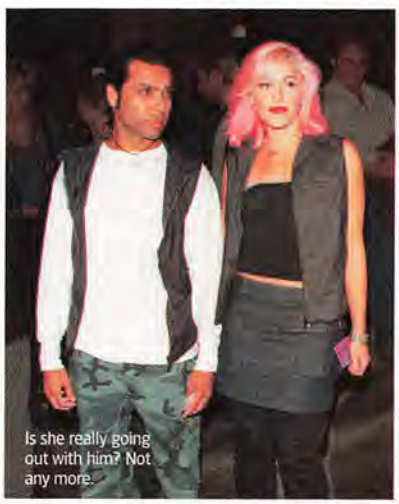
Sting's "awful separation" from wife Tomelty, an actress, and their two children inspired 1983's "Every Breath You Take." It's not a love song: Sting has called it "a little sinister — it's about control."

JULIANNE PHILLIPS

Although **Bruce Springsteen**'s affair with singer Patti Scialfa precipitated his divorce from actress Phillips, the resulting song cycle on *Tunnel of Love* (1987) offered the Boss as the injured party, whose faith in love and life was ruined.

TONY KANAL

The No Doubt bassist romanced his lead singer, blonde starlet **Gwen Stefani**, for eight years, but his love turned to dust just before the band recorded its breakthrough album, 1995's *Tragic Kingdom*. The highlight: "Don't Speak," a poison-pen ballad from Gwen to Tony. *JOHNNY BLACK*



Is she really going out with him? Not any more.

"I think I gave indications early on that mine wasn't just going to be a commercial, er, career. If that were the case, then the first record would have been 10 versions of 'Loser.' I always thought it would be interesting if there was no such thing as gold and platinum records or record deals, and people were just making *music*. What would the music sound like?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ALTHOUGH HE RECOILS from attempts to attribute his maverick inclinations to his background, Beck has bohemian blood in his veins.

He was born Bek David Campbell 32 years ago in downtown Los Angeles, just minutes away from where he lives now. His father is a respected string arranger who worked with his son on *Sea Change*'s elegant orchestration; he also lists Aerosmith, Alanis Morissette and Green Day on his résumé. Beck's mother (whose surname he took when his parents divorced) is Bibbe Hansen, an L.A. scene fixture who acted for Andy Warhol at age 13 and now owns a restaurant with her second husband, artist Sean Carillo, who she began seeing when Carillo was only 15. Then there's Bibbe's late father, Al Hansen, a contemporary of Yoko Ono in the avant-garde Fluxus art movement. A family like that was never likely to raise a cynical unit-shifter.

"When somebody is crying, that's no better an indication of them than when they're laughing."

"Art is important," Beck avers. "It's just an integrity thing. Somebody else is satisfied by five Bentleys. I'm satisfied by a beautiful string arrangement."

Beck is not a natural celebrity. Downtown L.A. is a world away from the Hollywood party circuit, and his idea of a good night out does not involve champagne or velvet ropes.

"I mainly go to parties to dance," he says, eyes brightening. "It's funny — I never got invited to parties until about a year ago. I was pretty much gone throughout the '90s, out on tour. I go once every month or two. It's probably that syndrome of looking at a car crash. It's interesting, but at the same time it's repelling." He blinks and smiles.

That sentiment might have something to do with his weary lament on *Sea Change*'s "Lost Cause": "This town is cruel; nobody cares."

"Yeah, it's an L.A. line," he says regretfully. "I wanted to take that line out, but I was too lazy. It is, though. People are very, I don't know, blasé."

He'll say no more about it, but the door on the pain that inspired *Sea Change* seems to have opened, if only a crack.

Anyone who has ever liked Beck but wished he would give a little more of himself might decide that *Sea Change* is a career high. It's a record to wrap yourself in on a long, lonely night, one to file alongside Joni Mitchell's *Blue*, Nick Drake's *Five Leaves Left* and Leonard Cohen's debut.

"It's almost like those early James Taylor singer-songwriter records," he says. "I don't like them. I just like the sound." He's a full-grown man, but he's not afraid to cry. He is, however, afraid to tell you about it, and makes laying bare his emotions seem like nothing more than simply a clinical exercise in genre-hopping.

"It's just a different part of myself," he says bluntly. "I don't believe that one thing tells you more about a person than the other thing. When somebody is crying, that's no better an indication of them than when they're laughing. They're all different pieces."

But surely these lyrics are more personal than, say, "Hot like a cheetah, neon mamacita" (from *Midnite Vultures*' "Hollywood Freaks")?

"The lyrics are in the tradition of songwriting that uses plain language," he says, slamming the door on the subject.

Beck pushes his plate away. He has a 10 P.M. appointment with dance producer Felix da Housecat, a key player in clubland's current electro revival. ("Speaking of introspection . . . " he jokes). His cultural antennae are always twitching. Maybe he and Felix will make a record together: a colorful, playful electro-pop album with no explicit references to love or loss, and nothing to endanger his fiercely guarded privacy. You can be sure that would suit him just fine. [BLENDER]

Hey, guess who got a trampoline for Christmas?

Clockwise from top left: Brian Hamill/Getty Images; Stills/Retna; Frank Trapper/Corbis Sygma; Brian Quigley/TimePix

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"I Was a Rap Star's Ass Wiper!

Puff Daddy says Fonsworth is "my assistant, but not in a demeaning way." But what's it really like to be a rap hero's manservant? *Blender* spends three days tidying up after hip-hop kingpin Ludacris and discovers that "there are some things a man does for himself."

BY ADRIAN DEEVOY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN JAY

★ "LEMME GET THIS STRAIGHT," says Ludacris with a frown, readjusting his famous testicles. "You will do whatever I tell you for the next three days?"

That's right, O multiplatinum-selling, Grammy-nominated hip-hop superstar. *Blender* will be your butler and busboy, staff and servant for the entire weekend.

"And you gotta do everything I say?"

Within reason. We will probably have to draw the line at anything that's bathroom-related.

"Within reason," he says, nodding. "Right, right, right . . . "

For a moment, the unflappably cool character formerly known as Chris Bridges is almost flummoxed. "This is crazy," he chuckles, playing for time, straightening his do-rag and attending to a few minor marks on his pristine sneakers. Then the king of madcap rap comes up smirking. "OK," he says, regaining his composure. "I want you to sprinkle fried chicken on the ground in front of me wherever I walk. Right now I'm walking back to the bus. So get sprinkling."

And thus it comes to pass that a full family-size bucket of Kentucky's finest is spread on the floor three paces before Ludacris as he gangsta-rolls 'twixt dressing room and tour bus. "Southern gentleman coming through!" he calls. "Y'all git outta my way. Hey, *Blender* guy, use bigger pieces. I can't be walking on no small-ass pieces of chicken."

At your service: Left, Ludacris with *Blender*'s Adrian Deevoy; below, Puff Daddy (right) and Fonsworth

"Now dance like a chicken. You heard me, a chicken!"

Blender guy nods humbly and stifles a sigh. There is, in fact, a method to our chicken-tossing madness: What better way to examine the inner workings of a major-league hip-hop star than to volunteer as his on-call, no-job-too-large-or-too-small personal assistant? How else to discover how he lives, what he thinks and whether or not he really walks that way all the time? By any means necessary, to paraphrase KRS-One. Even if that means joining Ludacris on tour and becoming his slave.

Back on the bus, with a smile as knowing as that of Colonel Sanders himself, Ludacris reclines in his favorite seat. "I got it," he says. "Boy, I'm gonna work yo' ass off. Now bring me over a beer, and make sure that it be cold. Can't be doing with no warm shit."

As the first of many chilled bottles is opened, Ludacris announces that he intends to call his next album *Chicken and Beer*. "Wash yo' hands and write that down," he calls.

Your wish, sir, is my command.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LUDACRIS WILL TURN 25, eerily, on September 11. By then, estimates tell us, he will have sold 7 million albums of his uniquely deranged Southern hip-hop. But after an hour in his company, you realize he's no fool. Perhaps this is because he has spent the last 58 minutes on his cell

"I'm cleaning a ring/Make it bling!" "Shut up!"

phone discussing detailed record-company business and a complex legal matter. The dirty dawg with the cornrows and cartoon expression may look like rap's court jester, but he can be — whisper it — quite a serious dude.

Along with his crew, Disturbing tha Peace, Ludacris is guesting on the Anger Management Tour, which features Eminem and Papa Roach. To this end, we are halfway up a mountain in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where Ludacris is about to perform to 20,000 sun-baked fans.

Gathering water, towels and fresh T-shirts (white, XXXL), *Blender* trails the posse through the dusty backstage area where, disastrously, Ludacris has already smudged his left sneaker. "Clean that off," he instructs. "Not like that — you making it worse. Use the cuff on your shirt. It's dirty anyway. Which reminds me: Tomorrow, I want y'all to wear a nice, clean shirt. Not creased."

Absolutely.

"And maybe get, like, a little-assed brush for the sneakers."

Excellent idea.

"And after you've cleaned shit, always wash your hands, because afterward you might be preparing my food, and I don't want no germs or shit in my shit."

Perish the thought.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AFTER A STIRRING SET, culminating in the powerhouse call to arms "Move Bitch," Ludacris — who has kindly allowed us to call him Cris — shoots off stage left, shirtless and sweating. It is, we suspect, time for a rubdown. "Mmm, that's good," he crows, crouching on a sofa. "Do all of my forehead — I want you to make sho' you get all the sweat off. Now, pour some of that beer into my mouth. My arms is tired."

While murmuring words of solace — it must be exhausting having to fling your arms around the way live hip-hop requires — we carefully tip cooling Corona onto waiting lips. "Yeah," Cris says between gulps. "A lil' more. Mmm, nice, good." He groans contentedly, then eyes the food table. "I want a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich," he decides. "But you have to make it right." →

"Mmm . . . lackeylicious!"

One down, 17 to go

A rare still shot from the never-screened pilot of *The Odd Couple: The Next Generation*

Smithers ♥ Montgomery Burns

Flunky Town

→ The biggest brown-nosin', ass-kissin', letter-turnin' suck-ups ever!

LACKEY WAYLON J. SMITHERS
BOSS C. MONTGOMERY BURNS
Long-suffering, loyal executive assistant to *The Simpsons'* diabolical tycoon. Loves his boss — if you know what we mean. Burns: "I guess there's nothing left but to kiss my sorry ass goodbye." Smithers: "May I, sir?"

LACKEY "FONSWORTH" (DEREK WATKINS)
BOSS SEAN "P. DIDDY" COMBS
Parasol-toting hip-hop manservant. "He's like my assistant, almost my sidekick," Combs says, "but not in a demeaning way." In the same interview, Diddy later screams at Fonsworth: "You didn't hear me? I said *two glasses of wine!*"

LACKEY CLYDE TOLSON
BOSS J. EDGAR HOOVER
FBI assistant director and Hoover suck-up extraordinaire. Said Hoover: "Clyde Tolson is my alter ego. He can read my mind." After the cross-dressing director's death, Tolson leaves his house only to visit the grave — then is buried in adjoining plot.

LACKEY ROBIN
BOSS BATMAN
Crime-fighting toady who always defers to older, buffer partner. Lives at Batmansion; attends to partner 24/7. Likes: tights, codpieces, getting tied up. Dislikes: Catwoman, Riddler, leg stubble.

Robin hated giving Batman his colonic.

LACKEY VANNA WHITE
BOSS PAT SAJAK
Wheel of Fortune's silent letter turner; history's hottest lackey. Admits in 1986: "It's not the most intellectual job in the world, but I do have to know the letters."

LACKEY JEEVES
BOSS BERTRAM WOOSTER
Unflappable English butler, star of P.G. Wodehouse's midcentury comic novels. Steals cow creamers, drugs orange juice and keeps upper-class-twit employer from getting wed unwittingly.

LACKEY HENRI-PHILIPPE PÉTAIN
BOSS ADOLF HITLER
Dictator of Vichy France. In 1940, forks over territory (and soldiers and Jews) to fairly insistent Nazis, shrugging, "My country has been beaten." Not quite. Gets arrested after 1944 Normandy invasion and dies in prison in 1951 at age 95. TODD PRUZAN

There follows a brief master class on how to construct the perfect sandwich. Spread the Jif Creamy right out to the edges of the bread (strictly white, thank you), and use about 25 percent more Concord grape jam than you do peanut butter. Cut horizontally; serve on a crumb-free plate. *Blender* proudly presents the culinary delight to Cris, who looks at the sandwich the way a mongoose might regard a coiled cobra.

Something wrong?

"Crusts," he sighs. We swiftly administer a surgical crustectomy.

Meanwhile, the Disturbing tha Peace crew is growing accustomed to having a valet in the house.

"Make me two of them sandwiches," says the lanky rapper who answers to the name of Tity Boi. "Crusts on."

"Me too," grins Fate Wilson, the smallest DTP member. "Cut in four."

As any experienced kitchen hand knows, peanut butter can play havoc with your teeth, especially if they're plated with several pounds of gold. Hence it's always advisable to brush thoroughly after you're done eating. Or, in the case of Poon, Cris's right-hand man-mountain, get the fellow from *Blender* to do it for you. "You got it," Poon says through a mouthful of minty foam. "Let me rinse 'em. I can do that part myself."

Before we pull out of Scranton for the six-hour overnight drive to northern Virginia, Cris outlines what *Blender*'s road duties will entail: make up his bunk, ensure that the sinks and surrounding areas are sparkling and that the carpet is vacuumed regularly. Apart from that, simply attend to his every whim. Most important is the cardinal rule of any tour bus: no solids in the lavatory. "It stink, dawg."

"Make me two of them sandwiches. Crusts on."

While we're on that unsavory topic . . . "There's some bird shit on the windshield," Cris points out. "Gotta scrape that off. Who knows, you might be saving my life by doing that." The droppings are way too high to reach. Cris charitably fetches *Blender* a chair, and the poop is duly scraped.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DURING THE EARLY part of the journey, the crew throws dice on the bus floor (with everyone losing badly to managers Big Jeff and Chaka Zulu). Cris, who is loath to gamble with those on the payroll, suggests watching a movie, deciding on *Con Air*. When John Malkovich makes his first evil appearance, Cris is thrilled. "Mal-ko-vich!" he cries. "Man, he's bad!" He remains silent until the closing frames, which are underscored by Trisha Yearwood's mawkish caterwauling. "This song is wrong," Cris says. "It don't spoil the movie, but it tries to." Before we can start a frank discussion of unsuitable soundtrack tunes, Cris returns to boss mode. "Can you go straighten out the back of the bus?" he asks. "Put stuff up. If you see any blunts or weed, don't throw them away. Bring them right up here."

Blender reacts to Ludacris's demand that he be able to "see my reflection in those Nikes, yo."

Attempting to increase *Blender*'s workload, Fate raises the notion that constant blunt-rolling would be a useful contribution. Cris considers the idea before turning it down on the grounds that "we don't want his spit all over the blunts." That's Southern charm for y'all.

Before turning in for the night, Cris starts to get a little stir-crazy. "Bus walls are closing in," he mutters. "Only been on the damn tour four days, and I already want to get off the bus."

Our suggestion of a soothing cup of hot milk is met with disdain, so we trundle on in silence. Just as we slump into restful sleep, the bus stops. We have found an open Wendy's, and an order must be taken, given, waited for and collected. Rarely has the phrase *double meat* been repeated so frequently. Cris and DTP consume the burgers with gusto. By 4 A.M. the final wipe-down is complete, Cris is safely ensconced in his bunk dreaming of ho's and money and *Blender* curls up on the bench beside the toilet to grab some much-needed sleep.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, Cris's schedule includes a club appearance in Washington, D.C. For *Blender*, this means one thing: Make that jewelry sparkle. →

First page: Big Pictures USA (Combs); Michael Matisse/Photodisc (toilet paper). This page: FotoFantasies (Simpsons); The Kobal Collection/Fox/ABC (Robin)

Winston

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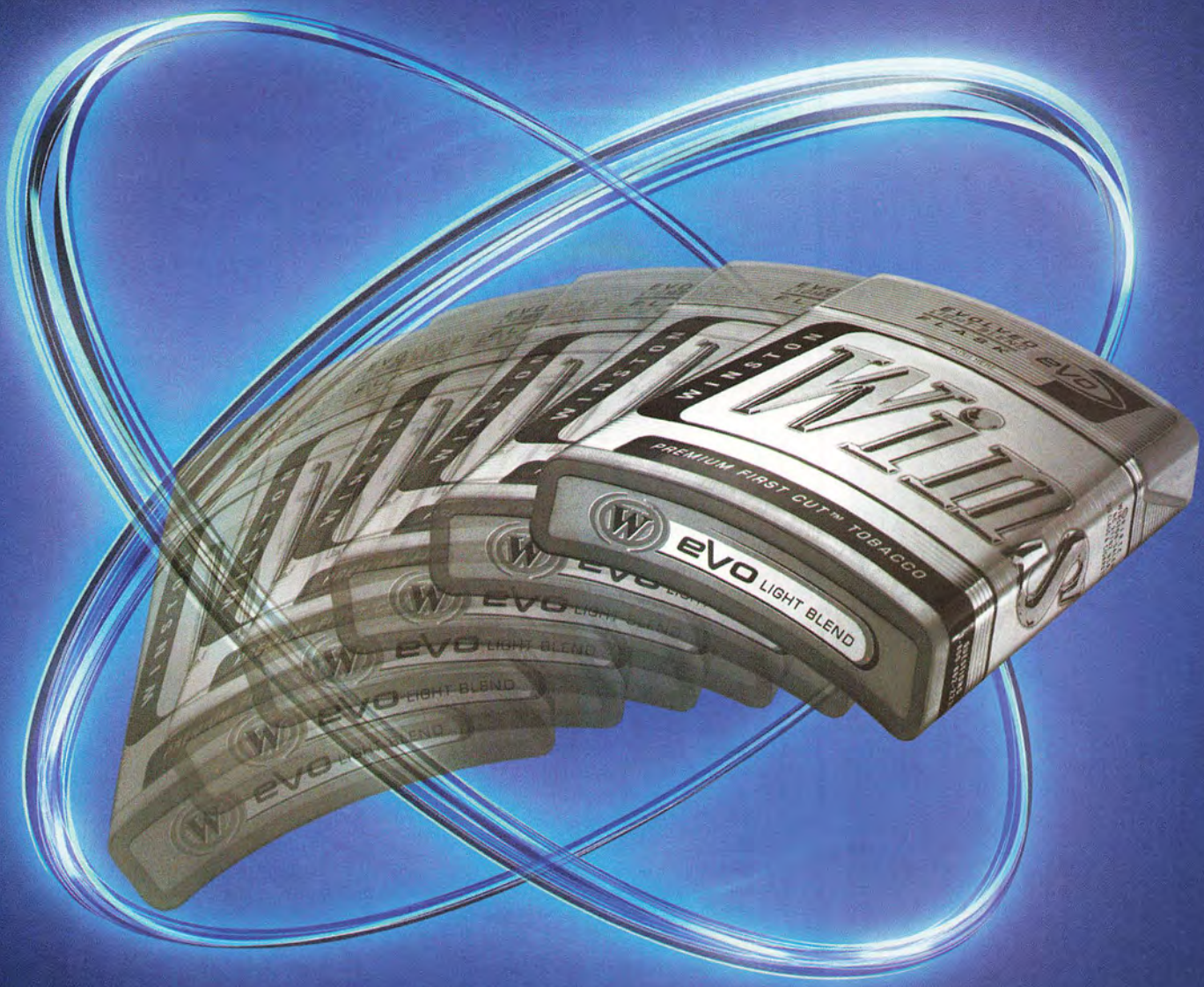

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I WAS A RAP STAR'S ASS WIPER!

Left, Ludacris onstage in Washington, D.C.; right, being toweled off backstage by *Blender*: "No one understands you like I do, Cris — no one!"

"A little water directly onto the platinum," Cris begins patiently, stooped over his hotel room basin. "A very small amount of toothpaste, then scrub gently with the toothbrush. Let them dry out for a while. Rinse with a wet towel, and dry and shine with a dry one. Got that? Now do the rings, the watch and these two chains."

How much, we wonder aloud, has all this "plat'n'ice" set him back?

Cris pauses and puts his hand on *Blender*'s shoulder. "A lot of money, bro," he says. "A lot of *murn-aay*."

Before leaving the bathroom, Cris notices some "lint and shit" nestling in his cornrow braids. In order to avoid a full-scale freak-out, we promptly remove the offending specks. Pacified, Cris goes to change into new jeans, a new "wife-beater" and new sneakers. As the jewelry dries, *Blender* offers to help him tie his do-rag, but he pulls away. "There are some things a man does for himself," he mumbles.

DTP have set this evening aside to "get fucked up." As we file into the buses that will shuttle us to the after-party at D.C.'s Club Insomnia, it's evident that some of us have already made a hefty down payment on tomorrow morning. The air is thick with "broccoli," the aroma of cognac and the perfume of the many bootylicious women who have mysteriously joined us.

"Now do the rings, the watch and these two chains."

Equally mysterious is Cris's politely attentive yet apparently uninterested manner around the ladies. This may be part of his calculating allure, but for a guy who claims to have "ho's in different area codes," he doesn't appear to have any in the district we're currently visiting.

Not that this is deterring the women flocked around him, keen to check out the rapper's enormous reputation. Cris's minders are kept busy dissuading the local lovelies from forcing their affections on this former radio DJ, who initially christened himself Chris Lova Lova.

In addition to keeping hormonally tormented womenfolk at bay, *Blender* must also endure champagne-pouring duties in a club that would put any self-respecting blast furnace to shame. It is, by common consensus, "hot as a muthafucka."

The tropical humidity and the excessive alcohol consumption may be responsible for a confrontation between the Disturbing tha Peace crew and the in-house security. Either way, it's not a pretty scene: Grown men scream at one another and threaten to crunch Cristal bottles into faces and "off" people with "Glocks." *Blender* suspends all professional services and hides behind a very large gentleman.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE D.C. BEEF is all but forgotten by the time we get to Manhattan. Our arrival prompts Shawna, Disturbing tha Peace's hardcore female rapper, to make an observation straight out of left field. "New York's one weird-ass place," she frets.

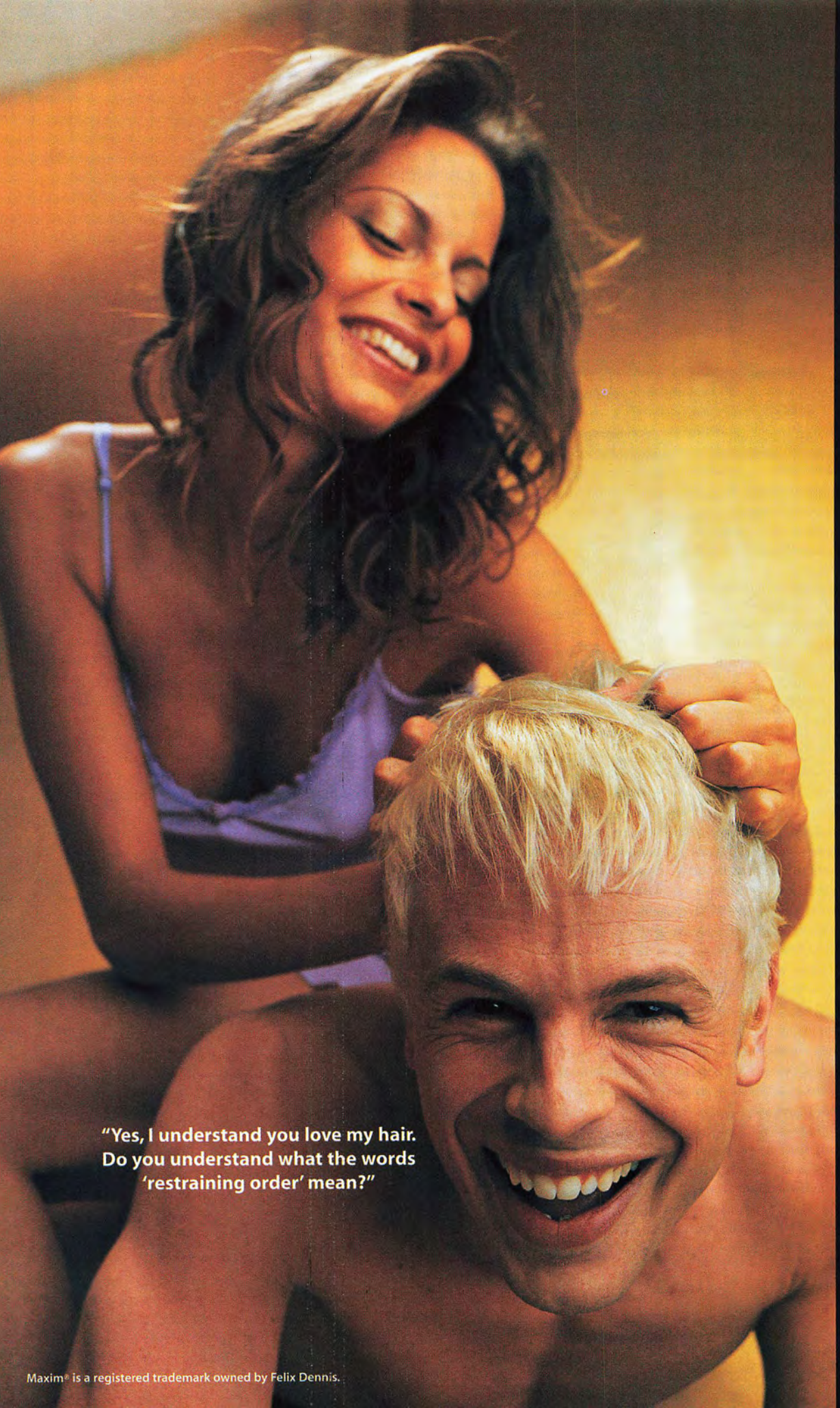
And why exactly would that be, madam?

"No alleyways. Know what I'm sayin'?"

Cris is still pondering his colleague's wisdom as we head downtown to Hot 97, the New York rap superstation. At the conclusion of an enthusiastic interview, Cris announces that he has concert tickets to give away — but there are, he stresses, unusual criteria for anyone wishing to win them. "I'm not saying only brothers can get these," he gurgles mischievously. "But the first person who comes here to the radio station and shows me a black dong gets the tickets. That's what you need to do to win. Show me the dong."

After the show, the first person we encounter in the reception area, alarmingly, is fellow hip-hop luminary Wyclef Jean. " 'Sup, Clef," Cris says. "My man Ludacris," Jean beams. (He shows no indication that he might want to win the tickets.)

As *Blender* helps Cris into a waiting vehicle outside the studio, he begins to laugh. "You were lucky, man," he says. "If Clef had gone and got out his dong, I would have had y'all clean that too." [BLENDER]



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She's the TV icon–turned–cleavage-flashing scream queen. Now **Jennifer Love Hewitt** wants to become a rock star as well. How badly? "If my album is a huge success," she tells *Blender*, "I will pee all over myself."

BY CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES WHITE

THE OTHER J.LO

MIDWAY THROUGH our lunch of Chinese food, Jennifer Love Hewitt offers *Blender* a job.

"We're looking for a drummer," says the former *Party of Five* star, digging into her plate of honey chicken and rice at Sherman Oaks, California's new Galleria. "Wanna join the band?"

Hewitt is putting together a group to tour in support of her new record, *BareNaked*. The Hollywood sex symbol is, it turns out, still searching for someone to play the drums — an instrument with which *Blender*, coincidentally, has some experience. Alas, we politely turn down Hewitt's offer, muttering something about always having been less interested in drumming than in drummers' attendant alcohol consumption.

"And the chicks?" Hewitt asks.

Um . . . well . . .

"So you'd just drink and hand out backstage passes to cute chicks?" Hewitt says, laughing. "You should be a rock star. See, I'm an awful rock star. I don't drink. I don't smoke. I don't do anything interesting. If I were on the road, then maybe once I'd invite a couple of cute guys to come visit me at the hotel afterward. But probably all we'd end up doing is ordering room service and watching a movie."

Hewitt's description of herself as "an awful rock star" would not be disputed by those who have heard her two previous CDs of innocuous pop (1995's *Let's Go Bang* and 1996's *Jennifer Love Hewitt*). *BareNaked* is a big leap forward, though, showcasing more substantial, rock-inflected tunes written by Hewitt with producer Meredith Brooks, best known for her 1997 hit, "Bitch."

"Meredith doesn't see a lot of movies or watch a lot of television, so she wasn't too familiar with me," laughs Hewitt, 23, who costars with Jackie Chan in *The Tuxedo*, which opens in October. "I was just this dork in her studio who was writing songs every day."

Hewitt and friends in *Heartbreakers*

One of Brooks and Hewitt's more successful efforts was the album's title track and lead single, whose video offers Hewitt — the star of the horror franchise she mockingly calls *I Know What Your Breasts Did Last Summer* — dressed surprisingly demurely.

"I wanted to stay away from cleavage," she explains. "I've been very lucky to do the movies I've done. But the characters I've played have had, you know, figure associations. I did two movies where my tops got smaller and smaller. Then I did *Heartbreakers*, which was phenomenal, but I had everything hanging out. That's not who I am in real life."

"I don't drink. I don't smoke. I'm an awful rock star."

In real life, she says, she's also not an actress-turned-singer, but a singer who simply got distracted by acting.

"I've been singing in public since I was 6," says Hewitt, who arrived at the Galleria without any handlers, having driven here from the Los Angeles house she shares with her mother. "I love all kinds of music."

That's what people say when they can't think of anyone they like.

"Yeah? OK — I love Bonnie Raitt. Her first few albums are phenomenal. I listen to a lot of Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Ella Fitzgerald, Tommy James and the Shondells. I've just bought *Journey's Greatest Hits* and a Stevie Wonder box set and — "

Journey's Greatest Hits?

"They're my favorite rock band!" she enthuses. "I'm obsessed with the '80s. I'd love to meet Cher and Cyndi Lauper. I saw them both in concert. One of the greatest nights of my life! And their *butts* are phenomenal!"

Another musician whose butt Hewitt has allegedly been in admiration of recently is singer-songwriter John Mayer, with whom she has been photographed holding hands.

"I'm a huge fan of his," Hewitt demurs, "but we're not going out. People always catch onto something and make stories about it. Because he had this new single coming out, 'Your Body Is a Wonderland,' everyone's like, did he write it for me? Which is ridiculous. I mean, that album was made a year ago! If you could see what I had to offer, it would be 'Your Body Is a Disaster.' "

Not so: Covered up in faded jeans and a white blouse, Hewitt's frame is a far cry from disastrous. Indeed, she looks every inch like a rock star in waiting, even if says she's determined not to raise her hopes too high.

"Before I went out on my promotional tour, I thought, 'What do I really want out of this record?' " she says. "I decided that I wanted to see one [fan] sing my lyrics along with me. Then the other day, when I performed on *Total Request Live*, I saw a girl sing every word. I was trying not to cry.

"So whatever happens now is really OK with me," she adds. "But, I mean, if it's a huge success, I will pee all over myself with excitement." [BLENDER]

Styling: Daniel Caudill for Celestine.com; makeup: Francesca Tolot for Cloutiestagency.com; hair: Lani Reeves for Lazartigue/Celestine.com. This page: Murray Close/MGM/The Neal Peters Collection

Jennifer Love Hewitt:
Actress, singer and collector
of eighteenth-century
Prussian cavalrymen's tunics
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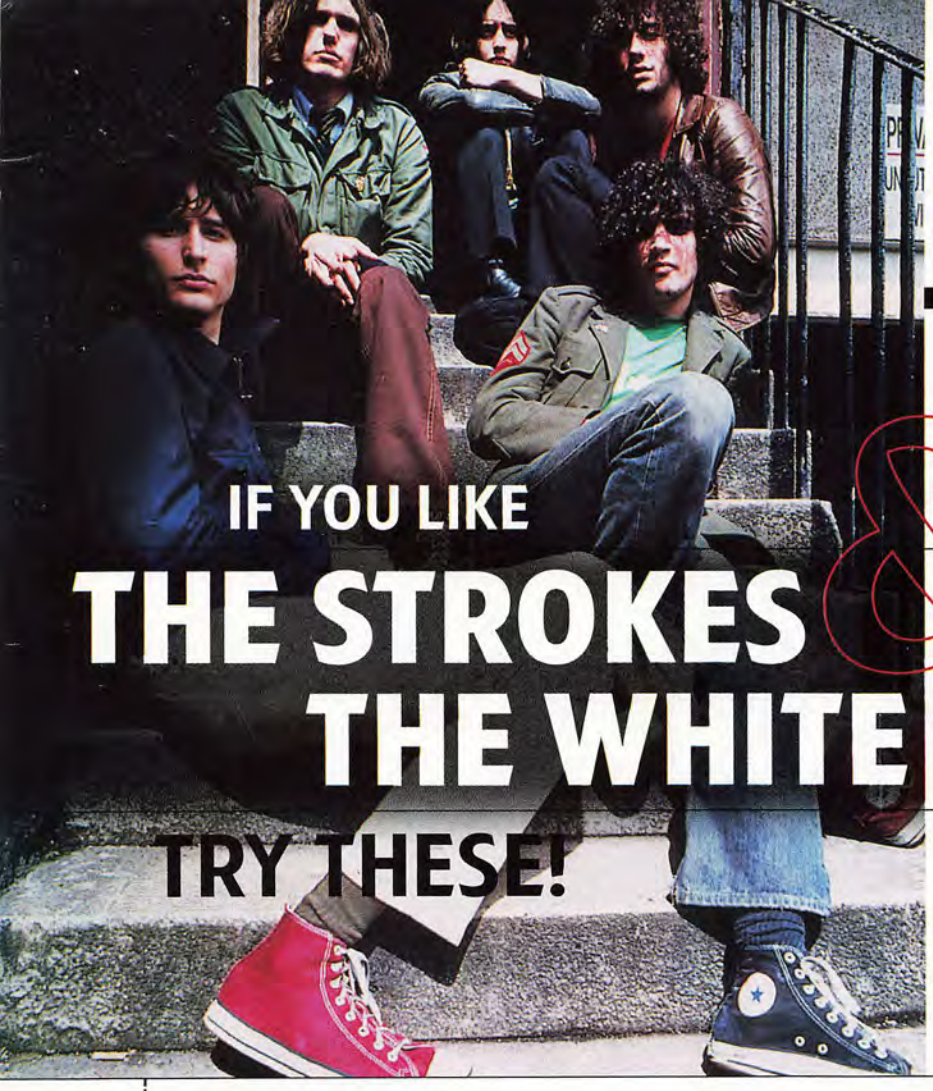
JEANS BY EARL JEANS



Blender Recommends!

IF YOU LIKE THE STROKES & THE WHITE STRIPES TRY THESE!

Ever wonder where the Hives, the Vines and the aforementioned Strokes and Stripes grokked their primitive brand of rough-hewn rock & roll? Wonder no longer. . . .

BY ROB KEMP, MAT SNOW AND ROB TANNENBAUM

NEW YORK COOL >>>

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
VU

POLYGRAM, 1985
RECORDED 1968–1969

★★★★★

Mislaid, obscure, cool: a typical Velvets album

Within a year of their Andy Warhol–promoted debut, the Velvets were out of style, at each other's throats and still making great music. Sweetly poetic? Try "Stephanie Says." But for Lou Reed's driller-killer guitar and savage wit, "I Can't Stand It," "Foggy Notion" and "Temptation Inside Your Heart" overload the circuits while remaining Manhattan-on-the-rocks cool.

JOHNNY THUNDERS & THE HEARTBREAKERS
L.A.M.F. (REVISITED)

JUNGLE, 1984
RECORDED 1977

★★★★

Love-sick, dope-sick New Yorker; helped blueprint punk

Given his voracious appetite for heroin, it's a marvel that ex–New York Doll Thunders made it to the studio to record *Like a Mother Fucker.* Miracle of miracles: The junk-rock anthems "Chinese Rocks" and "Born to Lose" persisted, influencing 25 years of excitable, R&B-infused NYC rock. May the Strokes emulate only their musical habits. . . .

RAMONES
RAMONES

RHINO, 1976

★★★★★

Half an hour that punked the world

Nostalgic for '60s three-chord classics, the Queens quartet retreated to rock's garage and built itself a hot rod. The first four tracks ("Blitzkrieg Bop," "Beat on the Brat," "Judy Is a Punk" and "I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend") say it all.

Ramones: clang!

BLONDIE
PARALLEL LINES

CAPITOL, 1978

★★★★★

The hipster party album the world fell in love with

Blondie's third album, and easily their best. Powered by Keith Moon wannabe Clem Burke and Mike Champer's radio-hungry production, *Parallel Lines'* sheer energy offsets its pop polish to keep things urgent. The essence of New York cool, and beautiful. Debbie Harry never sang any better.

JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION
EXTRA WIDTH

MATADOR, 1993

★★★★

Lower East Side R&B with perfect cheekbones

Ex–Pussy Galore frontman Spencer not only influenced subsequent hipsters to seek out classic soul, rockabilly and garage punk, but also — like the Blues Explosion's role model, Hound Dog Taylor — to forego bass players entirely. Style counts, too: Every time the Hives' Pelle Almqvist bellows his band's name, or the Strokes pay a visit to one of New York's thrift stores, it's a tip of the cap to Spencer.

Clockwise from top left: Derrick Santini/Camera Press/Retna; Suzan/All Action Pictures/Retna; Pieter Mazel/Sunshine/Retna UK

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The Hives attend the world's first usher convention.

R&B >>>

HOWLIN' WOLF
HIS BEST (THE CHESS 50TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION)

MCA/CHESS, 1997
RECORDED 1951–1964

★★★★★

Mountainous man, volcanic voice: Be afraid!

Microphones quaked when Da Wolf stepped up; 50 years on, press play and prepare to be blasted. For Chicago-via-Memphis electric-blues leviathan Chester Burnett, life was a dark night of the soul storming with rage — check out his song titles: "How Many More Years," "Evil," "Smokestack Lightning." And funny? He was that, too.

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART AND HIS MAGIC BAND
SAFE AS MILK

BUDDHA, 1967

★★★★★

The Captain's debut album: One sip makes you weirder

Dressed like gangsters, sounded like bluesmen from Planet Zog. Ry Cooder played guitar, but L.A. freak-scene regular Don Van Vliet had the blues roar and purple polka-dot vision. "Electricity," "Zig Zag Wanderer" and "Call on Me" are blues in wonderland: Like the White Stripes, when the Captain pitches that wang-dang doodle, it stays pitched. And doodled.

ALT-ROCK >>>

VARIOUS ARTISTS
DIY TEENAGE KICKS U.K. POP VOLUME 1

RHINO, 1993
RECORDED 1976–1979

★★★★

A dress rehearsal for punk rock

In 1976, U.K. musicians fed up with rock's bloat took a tougher approach to Beatles pop, balancing guitar distortion with handclaps and sly humor. The giddy spirit applied equally to songs about teen rebellion (Eddie & the Hot Rods' "Do Anything You Wanna Do") and dachshunds that ate their dead owner (Nick Lowe's "Mary Provost").

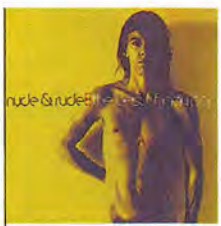
THE REPLACEMENTS
LET IT BE

TWIN/TONE, 1984

★★★★★

Amerindie heroes kept alt-kids and bartenders happy

With their third album, the Twin Cities foursome made the great leap forward from brattish bar band to raw, loud, heart-felt rockers. Songsmith Paul Westerberg hid his hurt behind a beer, but "Unsatisfied" and "Answering Machine" choke with emotion.



IGGY POP
NUDE & RUDE: THE BEST OF IGGY POP

VIRGIN, 1996

★★★★

Maximum grunge, feral wit, the perennial quest for kicks and true love

For Detroit's James Osterberg, rock & roll brought out the inner animal. Fronting the Stooges made his legend; working with David Bowie polished it. The rest retreads old glory.

Iggy Pop: drang!

MUDHONEY
SUPERFUZZ BIGMUFF

SUB POP, 1990

★★★★

Featuring the second-best grunge single of all time!

The Seattle quartet's scabrous, self-loathing single "Touch Me I'm Sick" influenced countless rejects over the years — including Kurt Cobain and the Vines' Craig Nicholls, whose poisoned "She didn't love me/Why would anyone?" howl in "Get Free" owes everything to it. Harder for Mudhoney's disciples to grasp was the band's biting sense of humor, which drips from the album.

THE FALL
458489 A SIDES

BEGGARS BANQUET, 1990
RECORDED 1984–1988

★★★★

Post-punk rant & roll, led by the thickest accent in all of rock

For 23 years and 29 albums, Mancunian malcontent Mark E. Smith has vented his spleen with varying levels of coherence and popularity, while his always-expert avant-garage band crackles its support. This singles compilation covers the Fall's purplest patch, and although Smith's then-wife/guitarist, Brix, tries to bring a sense of melody to these "hits," Smith's nasal honk renders it raw.

From top: Deirdre O'Callaghan/Retna, Gie Knapps/London Features

BRITISH INVASION >>>

THE KINKS GREATEST HITS, VOL. 1

RHINO, 1989
RECORDED 1964–1966

★★★★★

Cynics are frustrated romantics. Here's rocking proof

Ringing changes as fast as the Beatles, London's foppish foursome started with brilliant riff-rockers ("You Really Got Me" and "All Day and All of the Night"), then moved through wistful melodiousness ("Tired of Waiting for You" and "Stop Your Sobbing") to social satire ("Sunny Afternoon"). Ray Davies was the sardonic singer-songsmith; his kid brother, Dave, the pretty, unhinged guitarist.

THE ROLLING STONES DECEMBER'S CHILDREN (AND EVERYBODY'S)

ABKCO, 1965

★★★★

Stones' phase one peak, just before the drugs kicked in

Nineteen sixty-five: "Satisfaction" hits worldwide, and the Stones are enthroned as the Beatles' hoodlum alter egos. The best tracks here are the deathless single "Get Off of My Cloud" and the rama-lama take on Larry Williams's "She Said Yeah." The sleeve portrait simmers with the original dandy badditude, copped by the likes of the Vines and the Hives ever since.

THE WHO THE WHO SINGS MY GENERATION

MCA, 1965

★★★★

Drums, bass, guitar, vox: the band that exploded

The sharp-suited London quartet's artily destructive live act and confrontational R&B-pop sound set new standards of shock in Britain in 1965. On their debut, "The Kids Are Alright" and the awesome title track most excitingly articulate the frustrations of the Mod generation.

THE YARDBIRDS ULTIMATE!

RHINO, 2001
RECORDED 1964–1968

★★★★

Hugely influential Britrock band rounded up at last

Psych-pop pioneers, and a guitar-god launching pad — 'Birds Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page all went on to bigger things. Along with the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds wrote the book that the Hives and White Stripes recite today.

LED ZEPPELIN LED ZEPPELIN

ATLANTIC, 1969

★★★★★

The hardest, the heaviest and still the best

They were initially called the New Yardbirds, but Jimmy Page psychedelically renamed his blues-rock quartet before this epochal debut. Zep are loud and proud, offering vicious riffs that sucker-punch your sensorium on "Communication Breakdown" and "Good Times Bad Times." And, for the ladies, on the pummeling epic "Dazed and Confused," Robert Plant's controlled vocal hysteria signals the new sound of rampant studliness.

GARAGE >>>

THE SONICS HERE ARE THE SONICS

NORTON, 1965

★★★★

Stunningly primal Northwest garage band tighter than Shakira's leather pants

For sheer blistering fury, few can match Tacoma, Washington's Sonics. Demented, unhinged rave-ups "The Witch" and "Psycho" not only evoke a lumberjack Little Richard, but also presage the brute force of the Stooges (and future northwesterners Nirvana and Mudhoney). With all due respect to the Who, the Sonics are the true purveyors of maximum R&B.

VARIOUS ARTISTS NUGGETS: ORIGINAL ARTYFACTS FROM THE PSYCHEDELIC ERA, 1965–1968

RHINO, 1998

★★★★★

The alpha and omega of garage rock

In the mid-'60s, teenagers everywhere, juiced on the Stones and the Yardbirds, hijacked their parents' garages. An uncanny number made it to the studio and waxed crude, exuberant singles. This vastly expanded version of a 1972 compilation is the first draft of punk. Distill all 118 cuts into one, and you've got the Hives.

THE MONKS BLACK MONK TIME

INFINITE ZERO, 1997
RECORDED 1966

★★★★

Antiwar, pro-funny-haircut '60s freak-rock quintet. Kids, don't try this at home!

Five G.I.'s stationed in Germany during the Vietnam War went a little nuts — they shaved tonsures into their heads, donned sack cloths and played extremely repetitive songs assailing U.S. involvement overseas. Their sole album featured amplified banjo, martial-yet-danceable tempos and furious bleating. It remains, nearly 40 years on, the most eccentric garage-rock record ever.

BLENDER CHECKLIST

OUT OUT A GEM? THE STROKES AND THE WHITE STRIPES

- ☐ **THE KINKS** *GREATEST HITS, VOL.1*
- ☐ **THE ROLLING STONES** *DECEMBER'S CHILDREN (AND EVERYBODY'S)*
- ☐ **THE WHO** *THE WHO SINGS MY GENERATION*
- ☐ **THE YARDBIRDS** *ULTIMATE!*
- ☐ **LED ZEPPELIN** *LED ZEPPELIN*
- ☐ **THE VELVET UNDERGROUND** *VU*
- ☐ **RAMONES** *RAMONES*
- ☐ **BLONDIE** *PARALLEL LINES*
- ☐ **JOHNNY THUNDERS & THE HEARTBREAKERS** *L.A.M.F. (REVISITED)*
- ☐ **JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION** *EXTRA WIDTH*
- ☐ **HOWLIN' WOLF** *HIS BEST (THE CHESS 50TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION)*
- ☐ **CAPTAIN BEEFHEART AND HIS MAGIC BAND** *SAFE AS MILK*
- ☐ **IGGY POP** *NUDE & RUDE: THE BEST OF IGGY POP*
- ☐ **VARIOUS ARTISTS** *DIY TEENAGE KICKS U.K. POP VOLUME 1*
- ☐ **THE REPLACEMENTS** *LET IT BE*
- ☐ **MUDHONEY** *SUPERFUZZ BIGMUFF*
- ☐ **THE FALL** *458489 A SIDES*
- ☐ **THE SONICS** *HERE ARE THE SONICS*
- ☐ **VARIOUS ARTISTS** *NUGGETS: ORIGINAL ARTYFACTS FROM THE PSYCHEDELIC ERA, 1965–1968*
- ☐ **THE MONKS** *BLACK MONK TIME*

The Vines: "C'mon, nobody wears helmets."

From top: Michael Ochs Archives.com; David Tillow/Retna

33

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

ELVIS PRESLEY

Elvis may have left the building, but he hasn't left the charts: This summer's hit remix of "A Little Less Conversation" is just a prelude to a flurry of releases marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death. *Blender* salutes the King's immortal music, his tabloid appetites and his "Fat Elvis" free-fall.

BY ADAM HIGGINBOTHAM

"Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the crib!": Presley at age 2

1 EVEN IN THE SOUTH, ELVIS WAS A PRETTY STRANGE NAME.
"The first time I heard it, I said 'Weird name,' " recalls Scotty Moore, who played guitar at Presley's first recording session at Sam Phillips's Sun Records. "Sam's secretary wrote it down for me."

2 ELVIS HAD AN AMAZING MEMORY.
He'd hear songs on the radio and then sing them immediately. "It seemed like he knew every song in the world," Moore says. "Country, pop, R&B. Elvis had a sponge for a brain when it came to lyrics."

3 HE WAS VERY POLITE.
"He was always taught manners," Sam Phillips says. "His mother thought there was no reason to treat people except with great respect. If you didn't say 'yessir' and 'nosir,' that was a cardinal sin."

4 BUT YOU WOULDN'T LIKE HIM WHEN HE WAS ANGRY.
"He was real slow to anger," Phillips says. "But once he was angered, pound for pound I don't know of a person who was stronger. I remember one time at the gas station out the back of the Peabody Hotel. This one person who didn't like his long sideburns wouldn't leave him alone. Elvis had him down on the concrete in no time flat."

5 COLONEL TOM PARKER REALLY *WAS* A COLONEL. KIND OF.
Presley's legendary manager was given an honorary colonel's commission in October 1948 by Louisiana governor Jimmie Davis. Parker did serve in the U.S. Army in 1930 and 1931, but he didn't attain the rank of colonel. (Parker wasn't his real name, either.)

6 ELVIS'S GOLD SUIT WAS THE GENUINE ARTICLE.
The colonel had it designed for him for the opening date of a 10-city tour in 1957. It was made by famous Hollywood tailor Nudie Cohen and cost $2,500 →

I'd like to believe he's still alive. But I don't believe he'd be hiding if he was.

GUITARIST SCOTTY MOORE

During the show, Elvis fell to his knees and left a pile of gold leaf on the stage. Afterward, a distraught Parker begged him never to do such a move again.

7 ELVIS HAD "IT."
"He had a very, very contagious personality," Phillips says. "He was just like flypaper. Get close to it, and watch out — you'll get stuck!"

8 HE REALLY LOVED HIS MOTHER, GLADYS.
At her funeral in 1958, he tried to jump into her grave. For days afterward, he carried her nightgown around with him.

9 UNCLE SAM FIRST GOT HIM INTO DRUGS.
Private Presley was given amphetamine pills by a sergeant in 1958, and he became an epic pill enthusiast. He bought them in quart bottles from the dispensary.

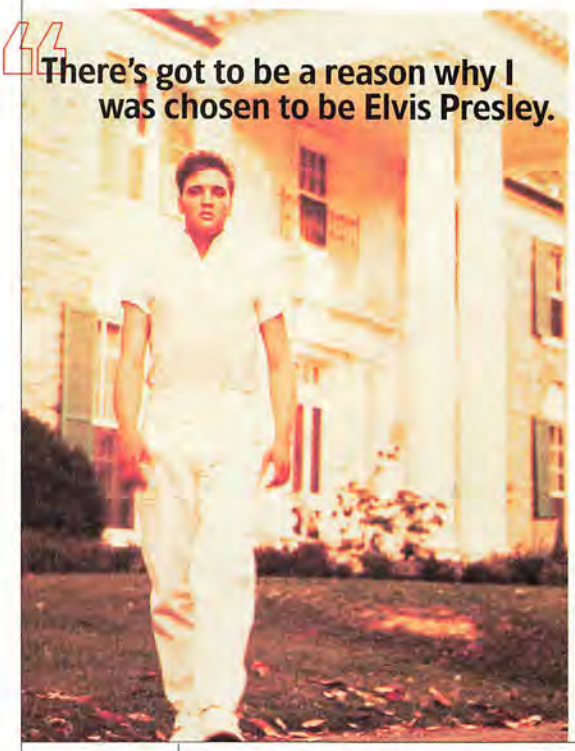
10 BUT HE NEVER GOT DRUNK.
Ernst Jorgensen, RCA Records' official Presley archivist and historian: "It wasn't like Elvis never drank alcohol as a principle. He just drank very little."

11 HE WAS A VERY SPIRITUAL MAN.
Larry Geller, who became Presley's hairdresser and guru in 1964, introduced him to spirituality. Geller gave him books he would cherish for the rest of his life: *Autobiography of a Yogi, The Impersonal Life* and *Beyond the Himalayas*. "I've always known there had to be a purpose for my life," Presley once said. "There's got to be a reason why I was chosen to be Elvis Presley."

12 ELVIS "DROPPED" ACID.
He'd read Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* and Timothy Leary, and encouraged members of his Memphis Mafia entourage to try LSD. On Christmas 1965, he took it with his wife, Priscilla, and two friends at Graceland. "Like everything else Elvis did, he tripped Elvis-style," Geller says. "No beaded curtains or incense. Several hours after we started, we watched a science-fiction movie and sent out for pizza."

13 HE NEARLY BECAME A MONK.
In March 1965, Presley, driving his RV outside of Flagstaff, Arizona, saw the face of Joseph Stalin in a cloud. "And then it happened!" he said. "The face of Stalin turned into the face of Jesus, and every fiber of my being felt it." He decided to enter a monastery. Then he changed his mind and began work on the film *Harum Scarum* instead.

> "There's got to be a reason why I was chosen to be Elvis Presley."



With his father on the day his mother died, 1958

Taking care of business in *Girls, Girls, Girls*

Elvis just loved his "fixins."

Colonel Tom Parker wins another cigar-chomping contest.

14 FOR A TIME, HE BELIEVED HE COULD CONTROL THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM AT THE COUNTRY-CLUB GOLF COURSE BEHIND HIS LOS ANGELES HOME . . .
. . . using only mind power.

15 HE MADE 31 MOVIES OVER 13 YEARS.
"Elvis hated most of those later films," says friend and bodyguard Red West. "I mean, in *Stay Away, Joe* they had him singing to a bull!"

16 ELVIS COULD PICK HITS. BUT HE NEVER WROTE HIS OWN SONGS.
"There are exceptions, when he changed arrangements so drastically that he got a writer's credit," Ernst Jorgensen says. "That's what happened on 'Don't Be Cruel' and 'All Shook Up.' But Elvis never saw himself as a writer."

17 HE ONCE SLEPT WITH THE ENTIRE CHORUS LINE OF A FRENCH NIGHTCLUB SHOW.
On leave in Paris in 1959, Presley and several of his army friends took the dancers from the Lido nightclub back to their hotel suite. The next afternoon, the Lido's manager called the hotel. He needed the girls back, he insisted, so he could reopen for business that night.

Not the chorus line that Elvis slept with

18 HE NEVER SOLD MORE RECORDS IN A YEAR THAN IN 1956.
That's when the single "Hound Dog" and its B-side, "Don't Be Cruel," sold 4.6 million copies in the United States.

19 AND NEVER FEWER THAN HE SOLD IN 1967.
That year was the nadir of his Hollywood period. "The *Easy Come, Easy Go* EP never charted," Jorgensen says. "That's when Presley's management realized something had to change. The movie was horrible. The songs were poor and poorly recorded, with bad arrangements. And Elvis didn't sing them particularly well. I'm told the Cokes and burgers during the sessions were OK."

20 HE DIDN'T THINK THE LAS VEGAS COMEBACK WAS GOING TO WORK.
Sam Phillips went to Presley's opening night in Vegas in July 1968. "He combed his damn hair about 50 times before he went out, and that was a pretty good indication that he was real nervous," Phillips recalls. "He hadn't been on the stage for about →

First page: Gillon/Curtis/Camera Press Digital/Retna. Second page: Corbis. This page, clockwise from top left: LFI; Bettmann/Corbis (2); Getty Images; Archive Photos/Newscom; Getty Images

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nine years. But before he got through his opening medley, there was a standing ovation. And then everything was over, baby!"

21 HE ONCE PLAYED THE INTERNATIONAL IN LAS VEGAS WITH A PISTOL IN EACH BOOT.

In 1970, he received a death threat before a show. "If some son of a bitch tries to kill me," he said to bodyguards Red and Sonny West, "I want you guys to get him. I want you to rip his goddamned eyes out. I don't want him sitting around afterward like Charlie Manson with a grin on his face saying, 'I killed Elvis Presley.' "

22 NOBODY PLANNING TO GO TO BED EARLY EVER INVITED THE KING TO COME BY.

"When he came to the house," Phillips says, "he didn't want to impose, but he'd stay all night."

23 PINBALL WIZARD? NOPE.

"He loved pinball," Phillips says, "but he liked to cheat a little bit. That's the only thing I ever saw him cheat on."

24 ELVIS WAS AN OFFICER OF THE MEMPHIS POLICE FORCE.

Shelby County sheriff Roy Nixon made the King a chief deputy in 1970. He had legal authority, and could have made arrests.

25 "FAT ELVIS" WASN'T AS FAT AS COMMONLY BELIEVED.

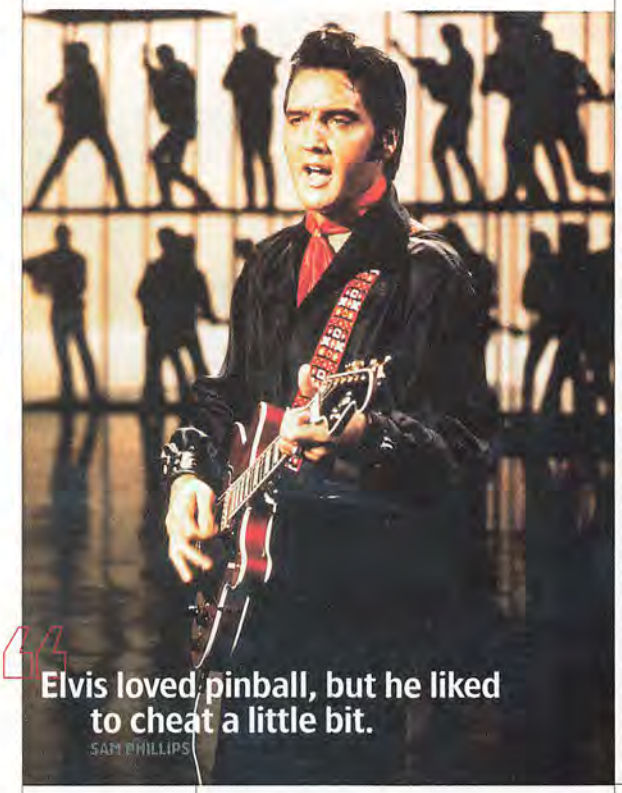
"He was a lot less overweight than people think," Jorgensen says. "In the Fat Elvis period, the last three years of his career, he was bloated. He had a lot of water in his body."

26 HE NEVER CALLED THE TV REPAIRMAN.

"There were a number of times I was around when he had been unhappy with the TV — the vertical hold wasn't holding or something," says his tour physician, Dr. George Nichopoulous, known as Dr. Nick. "He would get tired of adjusting it, and he'd shoot the set. They'd just go out and get another one."

27 ELVIS REMIXES ARE VERY UNCOMMON.

"I know that not only have [requests to remix] been denied in the past, but the use of Elvis's music in movies and documentaries has always been very, very restricted," says JXL, who mixed the surprise summer smash "A Little Less Conversation."



> "Elvis loved pinball, but he liked to cheat a little bit."
> SAM PHILLIPS

On the set with *Change of Habit* costar Mary Tyler Moore (left) in 1969

The Vegas years. No, really.

King and Prez: with Nixon in 1970

One of the few things Elvis didn't like deep-fried

28 MAYBE THEY'RE UNCOMMON BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN REMIXED BEFORE.

In 1983. Very badly. "It was called 'The Elvis Medley,' " Jorgensen says. "It included 'Jailhouse Rock,' 'Hound Dog,' 'Teddy Bear,' 'Don't Be Cruel,' 'Burning Love' and 'Suspicious Minds.' It was in the tradition of *Stars on 45*. It was a terrible idea."

29 NOBODY EXACTLY KNOWS WHO FIRST SAID "ELVIS HAS LEFT THE BUILDING."

"It would have been a stagehand in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1956," Jorgensen says. "It was basically to stop people from tearing down the building trying to get in the stage doors. Al Dvorin, who was Elvis's announcer on tours in the late '50s and the '70s, picked up the phrase. I think he even claims he invented it."

30 HIS MARTIAL-ARTS SKILLS HELPED HIS DANCING.

"The last time I saw Elvis was in 1969," says his former girlfriend June Juanico. "He had incorporated karate moves into his act, which was a lot better, because his dance rhythm left something to be desired. He had rhythm in his hands and his feet, but as far as putting 'em together with his body — he couldn't."

31 ELVIS HAD AT LEAST 11 DIFFERENT DRUGS IN HIS SYSTEM WHEN HE DIED ON AUGUST 16, 1977.

Among them were Butabarbital, codeine, Demerol, Placidyl, morphine, Pentobarbital, Quaaludes and Valium.

32 SOMETIMES IT'S LIKE HE NEVER WENT AWAY.

James Burton, the lead guitarist of Presley's band from 1969 until his death, still tours with synchronized footage of Presley playing behind him on a huge screen. "We play the music live, but Elvis introduces us from the screen. You hear Elvis's voice — he'll say, 'Play it, James!' You could be there five minutes, you could be there an hour, and all of a sudden you feel his presence. You forget he's really not there."

33 BUT HE'S DEFINITELY DEAD.

"He is very much in spirit, but bodily, no, he's not alive," Sam Phillips says. "How can I be sure? I touched his face and kissed him in the casket. In the music room of Graceland. I don't think I'm gonna lie about that!" Says Scotty Moore: "I would like to believe that he is still alive. But I don't believe he'd be hiding if he was." [BLENDER]

Clockwise from top left: Kobal Collection (2); LFI; © Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc.; Getty Images; Corbis

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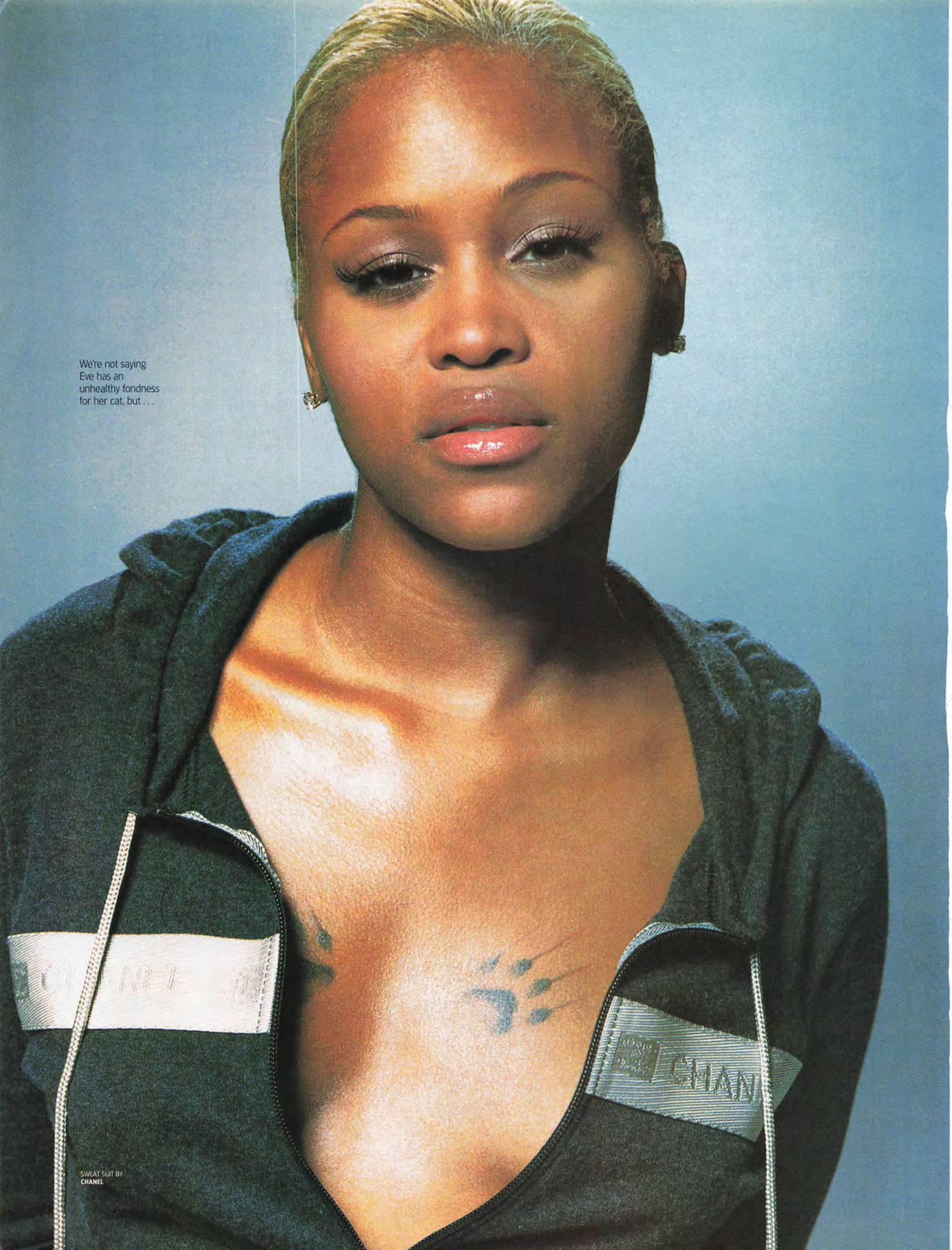


We're not saying Eve has an unhealthy fondness for her cat, but . . .

SWEAT SUIT BY **CHANEL**

All About Eve!

She's the "pit bull in a skirt," a onetime stripper–turned–hard-nosed hip-hop hellion who's now bent on conquering the worlds of fashion and movies. But what's this? "I'm such a girl," **Eve** says. "It's *ridiculous*."

BY D.J. CENTURY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE LEVITT

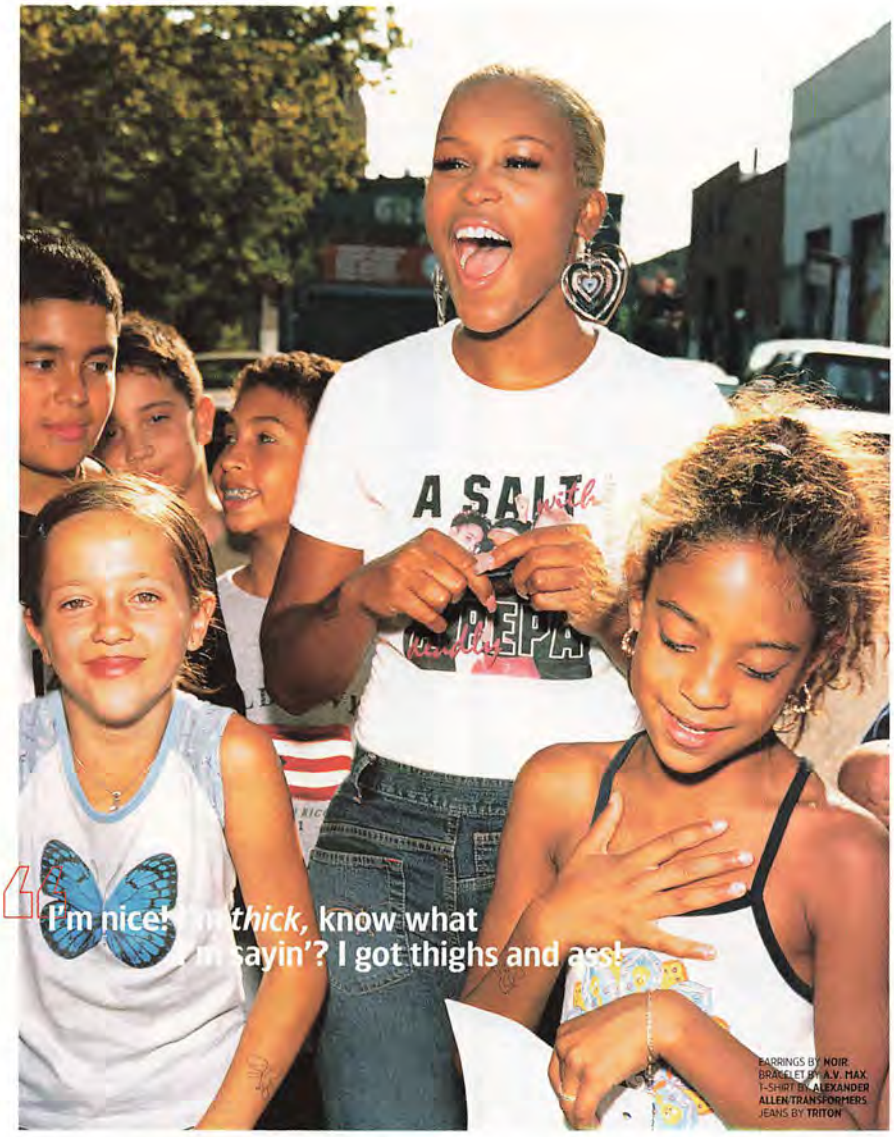
AS EVE GLIDES across the lobby of the W Hotel in midtown Manhattan, the first thing you notice are her legs: long, smooth, bronze, lightly gleaming with lotion. The 23-year-old rapper is strutting in high-heeled sandals, her denim micro-miniskirt struggling to stay in place on her hips. Climbing a flight of stairs to a secluded lounge for an interview with *Blender*, she tugs at the back hem, well aware that several dozen sets of male eyes are fixed on her bare thighs and barely covered behind.

"I am a woman, so I celebrate my femininity," she says, sinking back in an armchair, eyes shielded by tinted glasses. "I don't take it too far, I think. I show my legs, and sure, some days my skirts are shorter than others." She lets out a long, quiet laugh, glancing down at the expanse of brown skin between us.

On her most recent CD, *Eve-Olution*, her third, the self-described "pit bull in a skirt" spits her lyrics with a furious aggression: "Bitch like me, stomp out your little flames," she raps on the Dr. Dre–produced "What." Holding her own in the studio with such tough guys as DMX, Snoop Dogg and Dre, the onetime stripper sounds like the kind of hair-trigger hellion you'd probably be afraid to look in the eyes if she passed you on the sidewalk. And don't even *think* about copping a stare at the paw-print tattoos that adorn her breasts.

In person, though, Eve is surprisingly soft-spoken and affable, dolled out in a Fendi jean jacket, her hair dyed blond and wrapped in a cream-colored bandanna. She seems the antithesis of the in-your-face hardcore rapper.

"I'm not a stereotypical female MC," she says. "A lot of people are surprised I'm so feminine. But I'm such a girl! It's ridiculous! I'm a *g-i-r-l*: nails, hair, smells. I'm very into perfume, body wash, all of that." Like a hip-hop Rockette, she extends one of those endless legs toward *Blender*'s lap to show off her glossy, perfectly pedicured toenails. "My nail girl's coming tonight, in fact. Just some maintenance. If I have fucked-up feet, people would talk about me: 'Yo, did you see Eve's fucked-up toes?' "



EARRINGS BY NOIR
BRACELET BY A.V. MAX
T-SHIRT BY ALEXANDER ALLEN/TRANSFORMERS
JEANS BY TRITON

Born and raised in the projects of Philadelphia, Eve Jihan Jeffers exudes a more quiet confidence and sexuality than her contemporaries Foxy Brown and Lil' Kim. She seems just as natural in heels and a tiny skirt as she does in butch boots and leather, riding neon-colored motorcycles with DMX's Ruff Ryders crew. As the First Lady of the Ruff Ryders, she's become known as the queen of collaborations, working with No Doubt's Gwen Stefani on last year's Grammy-winning "Let Me Blow Ya Mind" and with Alicia Keys on her latest single, "Gangsta Lovin.' " But as a fledgling MC back in Philadelphia, Eve says what mattered wasn't collaboration: It was all about holding your own. →

No rap star should be seen without her own . . .

Clothing Line!

→ Eve's Fetish label will join a crowded hip-hop couture market. Fashion reporter Elena Romero and *Women's Wear Daily* editor Julee Greenberg size up the competition. . . .

BIGGEST!

Sean John

PROPRIETOR Sean "P. Diddy" Combs
ESTIMATED ANNUAL EARNINGS $130 million
BEST-SELLING ITEM Velour track suit, $185
OUR EXPERTS SAY "Sean John has introduced dressier fabrics like fur and cashmere to the urban market," Romero says. "Puffy competes with Armani and Donna Karan."

FASTEST GROWING!

RocaWear

PROPRIETOR Jay-Z
ESTIMATED ANNUAL EARNINGS $120 million
BEST-SELLING ITEM Heavy brushed, French-ribbed track suit, $156
OUR EXPERTS SAY "The fit of their sweat suits is great," Greenberg says. "They retail for $150, and the kids are still buying them."

MOST BLUNTED!

K-Nine

PROPRIETOR Snoop Dogg
ESTIMATED ANNUAL EARNINGS $25 million
BEST-SELLING ITEM Snoop All-stars Collection track suit, $155
OUR EXPERTS SAY "K-Nine is the first line from a West Coast rapper," Romero says, "and its style is regional — a lot of his shirts, for instance, have a bandanna pattern."

MOST FLAMBOYANT!

OutKast Wear

PROPRIETORS OutKast's Andre 3000 and Big Boi
ESTIMATED ANNUAL EARNINGS Not available
BEST-SELLING ITEM Fashion denim set (jeans and jacket), $220
OUR EXPERTS SAY "Dre has a very flamboyant style, so the velours inspired by him will be bright," Romero says. Adds Greenberg: "I'd like to see them do pink shorts for men."

P. Diddy: "I invented the track suit!"

NEWEST!

Vokal

PROPRIETOR Nelly
ESTIMATED ANNUAL EARNINGS Not available
BEST-SELLING ITEM Fallback football jersey, $70
OUR EXPERTS SAY "Like Jay-Z, Nelly leans toward athletic, active wear," Romero says. "But the newly launched Vokal just caters to men."

ROB KEMP

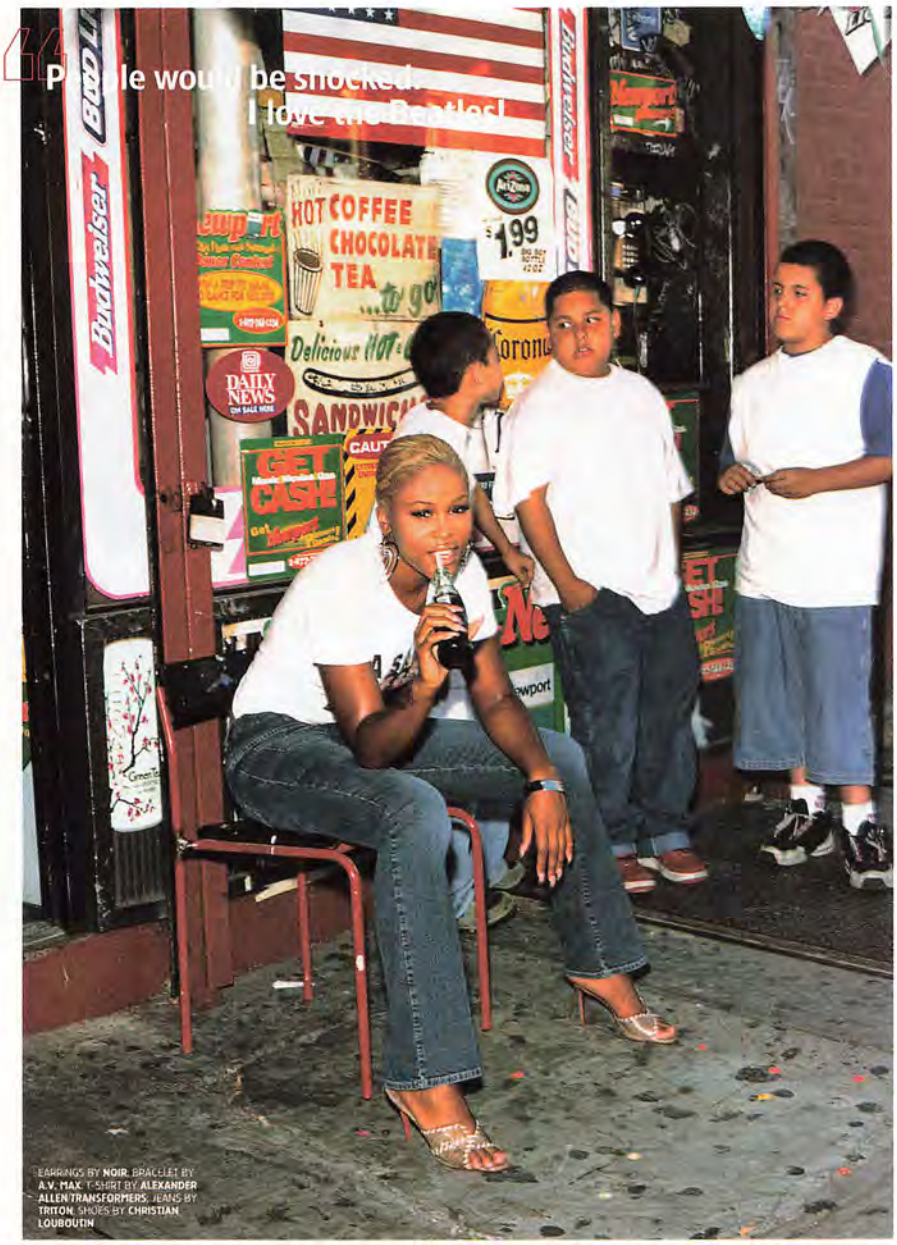
"My first time getting recognition for being a rapper was in high school," she recalls. "I battled anybody, any day, in the bathroom, in the lunchroom. It was mostly guys; there weren't really girls who rapped. It would be me and four or five guys. One guy would be beat-boxing or hitting the table, and we would just go at it for the whole lunch hour. I would battle reggae artists. We had a big Jamaican scene in my high school, and I'd write reggae songs in patois and battle them. I was like, 'You're gonna know me!' "

Now the world — that is, not just hip-hop aficionados — is most definitely getting to know her. She has branched out into acting, appearing (albeit briefly) as Vin Diesel's sidekick in *XXX* and playing a jealous, violent girlfriend in the Ice Cube comedy *Barbershop*.

Early next year, Eve will debut a signature clothing line, Fetish, produced in conjunction with the Italian designer Iceberg. "It's not going to be too much hip-hop style," she notes. "I'll definitely have some sweat suits — I have to do that. But it's going to be more feminine. More tight jeans and 'girl' clothes, like what I wear."

In your collaboration with Gwen Stefani, you rap: "Damn, she's much thinner/Nah, now I'm complete." Is that something you get a lot, that you look thinner in person?

"I get that every time I'm on the street. More from women than men. Men usually just say, 'Damn, don't get too skinny!' I swear I've only ever been 145 or 150 pounds. Of course, TV does add weight; that's not bullshit. When I first



EARRINGS BY **NOIR**. BRACELET BY **A.V. MAX**. T-SHIRT BY **ALEXANDER ALLEN TRANSFORMERS**. JEANS BY **TRITON**. SHOES BY **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN**

Styling: Alexander Allen for Mel Bryant. makeup: J.J. Jacobucci for Bradley Curry; hair: Suzette Boozer for Artists. This page, clockwise from top left: Vince Bucci/Getty Images; Danielle Levitt. Doug Kanter/AFP/Newscom. Opposite page, from left: Michael Caulfield/WireImage.com; Steven Tackett/WireImage.com

came out, I guess I looked like 170 or 175. But when people see me they say, 'Oh, my God, you're so small; where's the rest of you?' It's not like I'm 100 pounds here. I'm still 135. I'm nice! I'm thick, know what I'm sayin'? I got thighs and ass! I have a woman's body. It's like, 'Nah, now I'm complete.' "

Is it difficult for a multiplatinum-selling female MC to meet guys?

She sighs. "It's so hard. It's an intimidation and an ego thing. Because I am an entertainer, and I run into a lot of entertainers. Already men are very retarded with their feelings. I haven't met too many entertainers who are just willing to let go."

To prove it, she shows *Blender* a large cluster of flowers tattooed on her forearm, where the name of her longtime boyfriend, R&B singer Stevie J., once flowed in blue ink.

"That was closing the chapter, closing the book," she says of the decision to alter the tattoo. "It took me a while to get the cover-up, but when I got it down in Miami I pleaded to the tattooist, 'Yo, please, you have to do something. You have to hook me up.' "

Despite her party-girl reputation, Eve says that most nights she can be found curled up inside her townhouse in Oakland, New Jersey, cooking dinner for herself, a stack of DVDs from Blockbuster and Beatles CDs nearby.

The Beatles?

"People would be shocked. I love the Beatles. My favorite song is, uh, what's it called? 'All the lonely people.' I love that."

"Eleanor Rigby"?

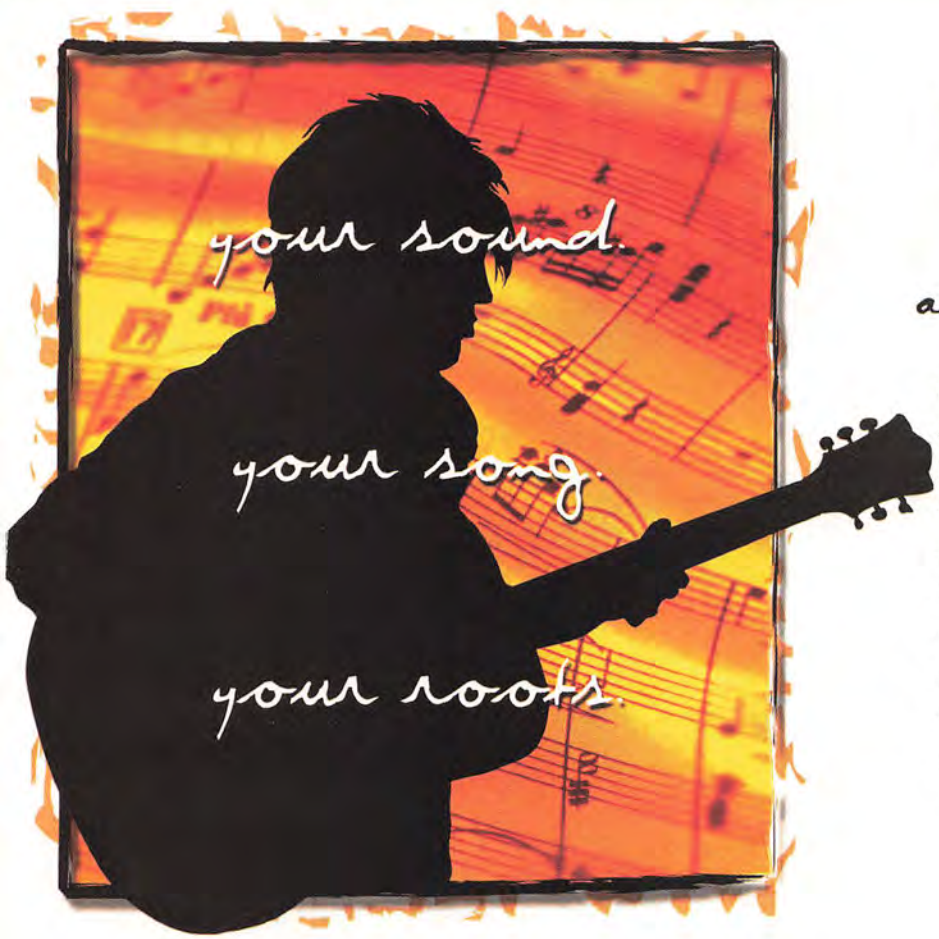
"Yeah. 'Eleanor Rigby.' If I had a rock band I'd make them do that over, really *rock* that shit. You know what else I just bought? The Doors' box set. I mean, Jim Morrison's energy made me want to figure out what was going on in his head: Why was he so self-destructive? He sacrificed his soul for his music."

It's not especially common for a hip-hop artist to wax rhapsodic about baby-boomer favorites who either stopped recording or overdosed a decade before she was even born. But then, Eve isn't easily pigeonholed.

"I know people are like, 'Damn, she's crazy,' " she smiles. "But I like everybody from Tupac to Nickelback. If it's a good song, yo, you can't deny it." [BLENDER]

↓ At the 2002 MTV Movie Awards, Vin Diesel points out the one critic who liked *XXX*.

Massachusetts, August 2001: valiantly attempting to repopularize the "Funky Chicken"



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The money shot: Trustcompany, from left: James Fukai, Kevin Palmer, Jason Singleton, Josh Moates

BY MATT DIEHL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS McPHERSON

Spend Our Cash!

→ **The Band**

Trustcompany

→ **The Mission**

To spend $848 in under 12 hours any way they want

→ **The Reason**

Blender asked them to!

"Buying Crack Would Be Funny!"

What will nü-metallers **Trustcompany** purchase with almost a grand of *Blender*'s dough? Booze, piercings, offensive hats . . . and $162 worth of processed meat!

★ "I'D LIKE TO make a statement: I *didn't* go into the porn section!" declares Trustcompany bassist Josh Moates, standing in the *Hustler* store in Los Angeles. "My mom might read that shit. I mean, heck, we're from Alabama. . . . "

Montgomery, Alabama, to be precise. "It's home," says frontman Kevin Palmer, picking up an issue of *Perfect 10*. "But there's nothing to do there."

In the *Hustler* store, on the other hand, there is plenty to do — spend time perusing the vast selection of "anal fisting" DVDs, for example.

"I'm learning so much just by looking at the covers!" marvels the band's drummer, Jason Singleton.

In Trustcompany's defense, *Blender* bears some responsibility for their presence at Larry Flynt's Xanadu of sexual pleasure. Tonight, the quartet has agreed to an experiment: to see what a band, each member surviving on a mere $20 a day as part of the Warped tour, will do when handed the randomly chosen but sizeable sum of $848. The only conditions: They must get rid of it all tonight, and allow *Blender* to tag along as they do. Otherwise, they're free to spend the money however they like — be it on wine, women or, er, vibrating thongs.

"Wow, 'ultimate hands-free stimulation,' " Singleton notes, inspecting the package. "That's fucking *weird*."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"THE WARPED TOUR is like punk-rock band camp," explains guitarist James

8:55PM
Palmer regrets trying on the "small" thong.

9:20PM
Putting the *mania* in Tattoo Mania

9:28PM
"I was born on a pirate ship."

10:37PM
Note: man at left may not actually be a "Westsider."

11:33PM
"OK, now let's get her to do it nekkid."

9:51PM "Hey, this isn't the Fellini section!"

Fukai. "You're dirty and nasty all the time. I haven't slept for two days."

At 8 P.M., an hour and a half before Trustcompany hit the *Hustler* store, the band spills out of its tour van onto the streets of Hollywood with *Blender* in tow. Despite their admitted fatigue, the four musicians, all of whom are in their mid- to late twenties, seem genuinely thrilled at the prospect of blowing nearly a grand in one evening — even if they initially profess some bewilderment over how to spend the cash.

"Let's get it all in nickels and put it into a gumball dispenser," Moates suggests. "Buying crack would also be pretty funny." The bassist is Trustcompany's resident comedian, though he's concerned about some of his material — he requests that *Blender* "not print my cuss words — my mom will go off!"

Singleton finally says what's on everyone's mind: "I want a beer."

They march into Three of Clubs, a venerable Hollywood drinking institution whose walls are lined with red velvet. It's soon apparent that although their Top 15 debut, *The Lonely Position of Neutral*, revels in nü-metal's more wistful side, Trustcompany are four guys much more likely to drink beer than to cry in it. Moreover, singer Palmer soon belies his reputation as "the sensitive one" in the band by throwing money in the air and yelling, "Bling-bling, motherfuckers!" Fukai describes himself as "the really insane one," and his bandmates agree, nominating him "most likely to end up in a gutter bombed out of his mind on Chartreuse" — something that once happened to him when the group was being wined and dined by major labels. (They signed a deal with Geffen last year.)

Having a record contract doesn't mean they're rolling in dough, however, which explains their enthusiasm for this mission. "We moved home with our parents to pursue the band," says Singleton, who tonight confirms his rep as Trustcompany's most business-minded member by hand-counting *Blender*'s slush fund to make sure we've given them the correct amount.

"We sold everything," Fukai adds. "All that I have now is a cell phone and an AOL bill."

"And every bit of my cell-phone use goes to my girlfriend," Palmer admits.

"This interview is taking away from my phone time with my girlfriend," Moates says. "She's like, 'You better spend all that money on a phone card.' "

There's a reason for all the extra telecommunications TLC their girlfriends need, Palmer explains: "These are Southern belles, not L.A. freaks," he says. "I mean, L.A. 'ladies.' "

Leaving the Three of Clubs, we head over to the California Surplus Mart at Santa Monica and Vine, where Singleton pulls a tight wool cap over his head and exclaims, "I feel like a penis!" After dropping $152.51 on camouflage T-shirts, Dickies and army pants, they head out to a waiting limo, also courtesy of *Blender*. Before they get in, Moates →

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VIVE Cuervo

11:43PM The guys mull blowing the rest on Pepto-Bismol.

2:03AM Can *you* tell which is the real Trustcompany?

2:16AM Broke, penniless, sans cheddar, etc.

conducts a psychological experiment with his newfound wealth: He approaches a passerby and attempts to hand him a $10 bill. "You're a lucky winner, motherfucker!" the bassist shouts. He becomes indignant when the guy walks away from him without taking the money. "What the fuck is wrong?" he moans. "In Montgomery, they'd be like, 'Hell, yeah! I'll take that $10!' There are retards in this city, for sure."

Then the band's wallet-emptying begins in earnest. At Tattoo Mania, Palmer gets his lip pierced, and Singleton briefly considers having ANUS inked in Japanese on his arm. At the *Hustler* shop, Moates grabs a mesh baseball hat with BEAVER HUNT emblazoned on the front. At the Amoeba record store, the band pockets $249.68 worth of albums; Moates hands the confused cashier an autographed $20 bill as a tip. Trustcompany appear less concerned with spending money on themselves than with introducing jaded Angelenos to the concept of Southern hospitality. When three young kids recognize Singleton, he offers to buy each of them a CD. "They were very stoked," the drummer says, looking a little stoked himself.

"This interview is taking away from phone time with my girlfriend."

Their generosity continues at our next stop, the legendary Cat & Fiddle bar, where Moates pays a thirtysomething blonde $15 to drink "the worst drink in the bar" — the "Three Wise Men," a concoction made of equal parts Jim Beam, Jack Daniel's and Cuervo tequila. At 11:30, Trustcompany arrive at Pink's, Los Angeles's famed hot dog mecca, where they spend $162.65 buying processed meat for themselves and everyone else lucky enough to be in line. "Are you kidding?" asks a disbelieving frat boy in a Dodgers hat. "That's crazy!"

HOW THEY SPENT IT

TRUSTCOMPANY
Los Angeles, CA
July 17, 2002

THREE OF CLUBS	20.00
CAL SURF MART	152.51
TATTOO MANIA	80.00
HUSTLER HLYWD	88.71
AMOEBA MUSIC	249.68
CAT & FIDDLE	45.00
PINK'S HOT DOGS	162.65
LAVA LOUNGE	20.00
PORTRAIT RENDERING	30.00
TOTAL	848.55

Finally, they decide to grab a nightcap at the perennially cool Hollywood nightspot Lava Lounge, where a band called the Insect Surfers is cranking out a set of twisted surf rock while an enormous peroxide blonde dances along. Trustcompany join her on the floor, boogieing with abandon and holding their Bud Lights aloft.

By 1:45, they realize last call has long since been called — but they still have $30. They decide to have a group portrait drawn. "By this bum outside," Fukai says. "He's a talented bum."

Outside the Lava Lounge, a homeless man is drawing portraits. "I've got to keep you from looking like Elton John," he says as each band member sits down. When he's done, Trustcompany, delighted, happily stuff the $30 into his cup. "I'm a good-looking motherfucker!" Fukai exclaims. "We're going to have to frame this!"

"Tonight was amazing," Moates enthuses as the band heads back to the van. "One of my favorite nights on the tour." Moates and Palmer, touchingly, agree that the best part of the evening was "hanging with the people" while buying them hot dogs. Fukai says he preferred buying CDs at Amoeba. And Singleton?

"The *Hustler* shop," the drummer concludes. "I *learned* things." [BLENDER]

First page and this page Alphonse Telymonde (still-lifes, 2)

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25 ROCK'S MOST DASTARDLY VILLAINS

Tipper Gore: "Put your hands together for censorship!"

Five are musicians, six are businessmen, two are inanimate objects and quite a few are utterly nuts — they are music's most reprehensible liars, cheaters, scammers and shysters. Lock your front door, hide your valuables and keep the cat in a safe place as *Blender* introduces you to rock's rottenest apples ever!

BY CLARK COLLIS, SHIRLEY HALPERIN, ROB KEMP, TODD PRUZAN, GABE SORIA, JONAH WEINER AND DOUGLAS WOLK

25
FEELIN' ON YO' UNDERAGE BOOTY

R. Kelly
Jerry Lee Lewis with a camcorder

RAP SHEET Personal-flight-ability-believin' soul singer Kelly married Aaliyah in 1994, when she was 15 (the marriage was soon annulled), and has a reputation for liking 'em young. The 33-year-old has settled two cases involving sexual abuse of underage girls.

This February, the *Chicago Sun-Times* received a videotape of a man who looks like Kelly screwing and urinating on an allegedly 14-year-old girl. Three more disgruntled youths subsequently filed lawsuits against him; in June, a grand jury indicted the R&B star on 21 counts of child pornography. His response? The song "Heaven, I Need a Hug."

THE DEFENSE Indicted doesn't mean convicted, and Kelly maintains his innocence, saying of the videotape: "I have no interest in seeing anything that I know I haven't done."

QUOTE "The world's greatest? Whatever/Ain't nothing but a child molester." — Sisqó, "This Is Heart"

24
THEIR INVENTION KILLS OUR STARS

The Wright Brothers
Aeronautical pioneers

RAP SHEET Fascinated by the possibilities of air travel after their father bought them a toy helicopter, Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully tested the world's first real plane, *Flyer 1*, on December 17, 1903. The brothers' invention would ultimately deprive music of an astounding array of talent, including the Big Bopper, Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly, Otis Redding, guitarist Randy Rhoads, assorted members of Lynyrd Skynyrd, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Patsy Cline, Jim Croce, John Denver, Rick Nelson and Aaliyah, all of whom died in plane crashes.

THE DEFENSE Orville, who outlived his brother by 36 years, continued to invent throughout his life, working on a variety of safer projects, including a toaster, children's toys and an automatic record changer.

QUOTE "I couldn't imagine our plane coming apart like it did." — Lynyrd Skynyrd security manager and crash survivor Gene Odom

23
DIRT DIGGER, ROCK HATER

Albert Goldman
Rep-destroying music biographer

RAP SHEET Elvis Presley had been dead for four years when reporter Albert Goldman produced a blasphemous 1981 biography, *Elvis*, saying that in decline he looked like "a big fat woman recovering from some operation on her reproductive organs."

Then in 1988, Goldman's *The Lives of John Lennon* enraged Beatles fans with a relentless cascade of tawdry scenes: Yoko Ono snorting heroin, Lennon soliciting boys in Bangkok brothels.

THE DEFENSE Goldman, who died in 1994, didn't much like *Lives* either; he complained that his editors cut 81,000 words of his more balanced manuscript.

QUOTE Yoko Ono: "I'm not aware that there were 81,000 words of positive material removed from the book at the editing stage. That's like saying that [Lennon's killer Mark David] Chapman had some very positive things to say about John which were not reported."

Clockwise from top: Mike Blake/Reuters/Newscom; S.I.N./Corbis; Bettmann/Corbis; Ernie Panicciolli/Retna Ltd.

Simon Cowell: "Ha! No one will ever dare draw devil's horns on me!"

22

JUDGE YE NOT

Simon Cowell

American Idol's Mr. Nasty

RAP SHEET By far the most obnoxious judge on Fox's *American Idol* talent show, Cowell, a British music executive, routinely dismissed singing hopefuls with such critiques as "pathetic," "rubbish," "fat" and "that sounded like a train going off the rails." He told one contestant, "You will never, ever, *ever* have a career in singing."

Another, after Cowell told her that she needed singing lessons, said, "I truly believe he enjoys getting people upset." Two aggrieved entrants attempted to assault Cowell after an *Idol* taping; he later hired bodyguards.

THE DEFENSE He loves dogs. "You'll never find anything on Earth more loyal than a dog," he says.

QUOTE "He has this thing about the sexual tension between us. But the only sexual tension is the fact that his pants are so tight." — Fellow *American Idol* judge Paula Abdul

Eamonn McCabe/Camera Press/Retna Ltd.; Kevin Winter/Image Direct/Nerv.com (inset)

21
TURN IT DOWN

Muzak

Purveyors of crap covers

RAP SHEET The brainchild of World War I veteran General George Owen Squier, the Muzak company has been guilty of sucking the lifeblood from countless melodies since its founding in 1922. It once even considered adopting the slogan "boring work is made less boring by boring music."

Muzak's existence so irked Ted Nugent that in 1989 the guitarist offered to buy the company for $10 million just so he could destroy its tapes. Muzak's output is especially lamentable to the partially deaf, who pick up the "mood music" at high volume, causing them "pain, discomfort and unnecessary distress," according to Britain's Royal Institute for Deaf People.

THE DEFENSE Muzak just might have helped avert nuclear war: During the '60s, the U.S. experimented with playing its mind-numbingly relaxing sounds on Polaris submarines to help ease sailors' frazzled nerves.

QUOTE "I like anything on Muzak — it's so listenable," Andy Warhol once said. "They should have it on MTV."

20
BAD VIBRATIONS

Mike Love

Anti-bandmate, pro-PMRC Beach Boy

RAP SHEET When the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson began conceiving his 1966 masteriece, *Pet Sounds,* his cousin Mike Love moaned that it would alienate the group's fans. Love has been openly hostile and litigious toward his bandmates and, according to Beach Boys biographer Steven Gaines, in 1966 he beat his second wife while she was pregnant.

Love is virtually the only rocker of note to have supported Tipper Gore's Parents' Music Resource Center and, in 1988, he insulted the Beatles and Rolling Stones at a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ceremony. Also seems under the impression that wearing a hat at all times will make people believe he isn't bald.

THE DEFENSE Some of Love's hostility can be explained by the fact that Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson seduced Love's second wife and then married his daughter, Shawn.

QUOTE "[Mick Jagger]'s always been chickenshit to get onstage with the Beach Boys."

Love is virtually the only rocker of note to have supported Tipper Gore.

19
USING MY RELIGION

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

The Beatles' libidinous guru

RAP SHEET A physicist from India, Mahesh Yogi gave up science in 1959, moved to London and began lecturing about Transcendental Meditation. A popularization of traditional Hindu teaching, TM caught on rapidly, capturing the hearts of (among many) the Beatles.

Things went sour when the Maharishi released an album of his lectures, dubbing himself "the Beatles' spiritual teacher." Accusing him of gross commercialism and sexual promiscuousness, every Beatle but George Harrison cut ties with him. John Lennon wrote "Sexy Sadie" about him; the song's original lyrics include this touching line: "Maharishi, you little twat/Who the fuck do you think you are?/Oh, you cunt."

THE DEFENSE Indian Major General Kulwant Singh recently said that Yogi's teachings offer a nonballistic alternative to George W. Bush's missile-defense system.

QUOTE "There is no guru. You have to believe in yourself. It's all up to you, mate." — John Lennon, after the fallout

18
ENTER BADMAN

Lars Ulrich

Napster-harassing Metallica drummer

RAP SHEET While Metallica have managed to produce only one album of original material since 1991, they've been working overtime the last few years to piss off electronic-file traders. In April 2000, Metallica filed suit against Napster for allowing its users to trade digital copies of Metallica songs. A month later, Ulrich hand-delivered to Napster a list of 317,377 people who had downloaded Metallica MP3s to their computers, forcing the music-swapping service to banish them and setting in motion the eventual downfall of the best thing to happen to music since Nirvana.

"Whaddya mean? This *is* my 'happy face.' "

THE DEFENSE Metallica later allowed Napster to reinstate 35,000 people who, it turned out, had downloaded only live recordings.

QUOTE "You want to fucking see in three months how we can fucking blow your measly little company apart? No problem."

17
GOT PLENTY OF "SATISFACTION"

Allen Klein

Avaricious manager of Beatles and Stones

RAP SHEET In the mid-'60s, Klein, who had managed Bobby Darin and Sam Cooke, noticed the Rolling Stones' mounting fiscal difficulties and swooped in, promising them shelter from crushing taxes. He became the Stones' feudal lord, acquiring their pre-1970 master recordings (which he still owns) and dispensing their cash in trickles. In 1968, Klein acquired another bauble: the Beatles, whose Apple Corps was in dire financial straits. The Stones and Beatles spent parts of the '70s wriggling out of Klein's contracts.

THE DEFENSE Both bands probably would have gone broke immediately without Klein's interference — particularly the Beatles, whose fiscally foolish Apple pissed away cash on such employees as the well-liked but incompetent technician "Magic Alex" Mardas.

QUOTE "Why don't you like me, Bill?" "Because I don't trust you, Allen." — A frank exchange between Klein and Stones bassist Bill Wyman

Eamonn McCabe/Camera Press/Retna Ltd. (Cowell). Clockwise from top left: Getty Images; RB/Redferns/Retna Ltd.; Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis; Frederick R. Bunt/Hulton Getty/Newscom; Youri Lenquette/Retna Pictures; Jack Smith/Camera Press/Retna Ltd.

16
WORST EXECUTIVE EVER!

Robert Morgado

Bean counter who destroyed music's best label

RAP SHEET By the mid-'80s, Warner Bros. Music Group was the most successful record company in the world — and the hippest, too, with an impeccable roster of artists (from the Grateful Dead to Madonna) and top-tier executives who knew how to make both records and money.

That prosperous era ended in 1991, when corporate hatchet man Morgado was appointed the company's new chief and initiated a restructuring plan that would purge nearly every top exec. Warners soon slid into mediocrity and has yet to fully recover. After his 1995 dismissal, a Dutch analyst assessed the company's music division as "practically worthless."

THE DEFENSE Has a sense of humor. He once admitted that Warners' bloodletting made "Bosnia look like Shangri-la."

QUOTE "Why would a man burn down the most beautiful house on the block, with all the beautiful stuff still in it?" — Former Elektra chief Bob Krasnow

15
HE KNOWS WHERE YOU LIVE

"The Man"

Shadowy figure bent on harshing world's mellow

RAP SHEET A never-photographed but enormously powerful individual hellbent on hassling, taxing and jailing our musical heroes through such agencies as the INS and FBI, both of which harassed John Lennon in the early '70s, and the IRS, which has put the pinch on Chuck Berry, Willie Nelson and James Brown.

The Man's influence even extends abroad, as Rolling Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards discovered when they were busted for narcotics at Richards's estate in England in 1967. Note: The Man is not to be confused with his drug-dealing cousin of the same name, for whom Lou Reed has been patiently "waiting" since the mid-'60s.

THE DEFENSE The Man has shown himself equally keen to bust such truly dangerous characters as Gary Glitter, Suge Knight and Charles Manson.

QUOTE "Ain't no God in Mexico, ain't no comfort in the can/When you're down in Matamoros getting busted by the Man." — Waylon Jennings

14
BOY-BAND BARON

Lou Pearlman

Brought you Backstreet Boys, 'N Sync, O-Town

RAP SHEET The Dr. Frankenstein of boy bands, Pearlman gave the world the Backstreet Boys, 'N Sync and O-Town — which alone would justify his inclusion on this list, even without the frequent accusation that "Big Papa" treats his charges in a less-than-paternal manner.

'N Sync began a bitter legal battle against Pearlman in 1999, claiming he "took advantage of our trust." In 1998, the Backstreet Boys filed a lawsuit alleging that in the preceding five years, they had received only $300,000 in royalties. Boys singer Brian Littrell was forced to delay crucial surgery on his heart because of touring commitments.

THE DEFENSE This April, Pearlman was cleared of allegations that he broke child-labor laws in his treatment of boy band Take 5.

QUOTE "You'll sign in blood." — The words with which Pearlman greeted prospective O-Town members on the TV show *Making the Band*

13
SUPREME BITCH

Diana Ross

That's "Miss Ross" to you, buddy

RAP SHEET The narcissism of Miss Ross (reportedly the only name she allows her underlings to call her) is legendary. In 1973, original Supreme Florence Ballard launched an unsuccessful lawsuit charging that Ross and Motown supremo Berry Gordy had conspired to bilk her out of royalties, and that the pair "maliciously plotted" to remove her from the trio.

In 2000, Ross attempted to organize a Supremes reunion tour; when her former bandmates turned her down (they were due to be paid a fifth of Ross's salary), she went ahead with the tour, joined by two ex-Supremes who had joined the group after she had left.

THE DEFENSE Although Ross made a showy, tasteless entrance at Ballard's funeral, she did set up trust funds for the singer's three children.

QUOTE "I want an autobiography without revealing any personal information whatsoever." — Ross, to prospective publisher Jackie Onassis

Rick James liked to conduct job interviews en masse

Confessions of a Reformed Villain

It's never too late to change your evil ways. Just ask **Rick "Super Freak" James**, who has neither freebased nor kidnapped or sexually tortured anyone in a really long time. Praise Allah!

A DECADE BEFORE R. Kelly learned how to operate a camcorder, funk-rock star Rick James was throwing away his groundbreaking career in a tailspin of freebasing and sexual violence.

In 1991, James was arrested, along with his girlfriend, Tanya Hijazi, on charges of kidnapping, burning and torturing a woman in their Los Angeles home. A year later, another woman filed separate assault and torture charges. Facing three life sentences for the drug-fueled frenzy, James escaped with a relatively light plea bargain. Because of allegations of prosecutorial misconduct, he served only two-plus years in California's Folsom Prison.

"I was a selfish and crazy drug addict who didn't give a fuck about my life or anybody else's," James, 54, recalls today from his home in Southern California. "I had degradation all around me. Pimps and ho's, actress-bitches and model-bitches and normal street ho's. It got to the point where I wasn't even able to get up to turn on the light. I paid people to do that for me."

James, who began studying Islam in prison, credits his incarceration for saving his life. "Allah blessed me with prison," he says. "I was able to learn discipline and build up my spirit." Now a veteran of Narcotics Anonymous, James prays daily ("I put God first in everything"), mentors young convicts in prison and guides his daughter, Ty, a fledgling hip-hop artist.

James released *Anthology*, a two-disc collection of his greatest hits, last summer. However, he blanches at the "living legend" title often tossed his way. "I don't know about legend," he says, "but I feel that I'm finally living." *D.J. CENTURY*

"I was a selfish and crazy drug addict."

Clockwise from top left: Vidal Medina/Reuters/Newscom; Ben Wiechenje; Freek Arriens/Retna; Scott Gries/Image Direct/Newscom; Douglas Kirkland/Corbis; UPPA/Zuma Press/Newscom

"So, about that contract renegotiation . . ."

Are You a Rock Villain?

Find out with this simple multiple-choice quiz

1 A rival band manager is attempting to poach one of your acts. You . . .
(a) Invite him out to lunch to discuss the ethical implications of his business tactics
(b) Instruct your lawyer to hit him with a cease-and-desist order
(c) Get him to reconsider by dangling him headfirst out of a seventeenth-story window

2 Midway through your concert, a 15-year-old girl in the crowd holds up a sign that says YOUR HOT! You . . .
(a) Invite her backstage and correct her spelling
(b) Invite her backstage and find out if she has an older sister
(c) Invite her backstage and videotape yourself peeing in her face

3 A publishing house contracts you to write the definitive biography of a beloved but sadly deceased musical icon. You concentrate mostly on . . .
(a) His singing and songwriting
(b) His adultery and alcoholism
(c) His habit of watching pubescent girls frolic around in nighties while voiding his bowels into an adult diaper

4 While you're judging a TV talent show, one of the contestants starts singing woefully out of tune. You . . .
(a) Tell her that she needs to practice a little more
(b) Tell her not to give up her day job
(c) Tell her you would rather eat your own excrement than be forced to hear her godawful caterwauling ever again

5 After years of physical abuse, your common-law wife/musical partner finally leaves you for good. You . . .
(a) Acknowledge your dark side and start attending anger-management classes
(b) Drown your sorrows in booze and coke
(c) Mercilessly beat her with a twisted coat hanger while yelling, "That'll teach you, woman!"

Are you a rock villain? If you answered . . .
Mostly (a): Congratulations! You aren't a rock villain at all!
Mostly (b): Congratulations! You are somewhat of a rock villain!
Mostly (c): Congratulations! You're a complete and utter rock villain! Time to send over some thugs with baseball bats to give us smart-asses the savage beating we deserve!

12
FILTHY LUCRE

Money
The root of all evil

RAP SHEET From Pink Floyd's "Money" to Jay-Z's "Money Ain't a Thang," the greenback has long obsessed musicians. Sadly, attainment of wealth rarely has a good effect on stars' careers — they become distracted by drugs, vanity record imprints, building home studios and, in the case of aging Brits Roger Daltrey and Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson, fish farms.

Financial considerations have also been behind many unwanted musical reunions (the Sex Pistols the most recent example) and countless band breakups. Worse, cash-related murders wiped out several Jamaican reggae stars, including the Wailers' Peter Tosh, who was shot to death by burglars.

THE DEFENSE Stars can actually do good with their fortunes. Pink Floyd's David Gilmour did so this past January when he gave $4.5 million to Crisis, a British charity for the homeless.

QUOTE "I'm going to build my own shrine, and then every dollar is going to be tax-free." — Gene Simmons

10
PEACE, LOVE AND RAPE

Woodstock '99 Organizers
Overpriced water and a grisly finale

RAP SHEET "We felt that as good as [Woodstock '94] was, we could do better," claimed promoter John Scher, explaining why he decided to schedule another show five years later. In fact, Scher and his colleague Michael Lang were responsible for a disastrous festival.

The last day of the 72-hour Woodstock '99 was marked by a minor riot, numerous acts of arson and a potpourri of other violent crimes. Attendees also reported many instances of sexual assault — including four alleged rapes, one of which was a gang rape said to have occurred during Limp Bizkit's set.

THE DEFENSE "Throwing psychology aside for a minute, in a crowd this size, there are going to be a certain number of assholes," said Dr. Paul Ramirez, the "director of psychiatry" for Woodstock '99.

QUOTE Asked about the alleged rapes, Scher replied, "What about the 199,000 kids who came and had a great time?"

11
THE KINGMAKER

Colonel Tom Parker
The original puppet master

RAP SHEET Elvis Presley's manager was actually a Dutchman named Andreas van Kujik, who came to the U.S. at age 17 and developed a carnival act in which chickens "danced" on a straw-covered hot plate. He began managing Presley in 1955, and swiftly steered the King to fame. In time, however, his ruthless pursuit of money had adverse consequences for Presley's career, as Parker forced him to appear in increasingly dreadful movies for Hollywood producer Hal Wallis.

Presley's estate sued Parker after the King's death in 1977. A court found the colonel malfeasant in his administration of the star's affairs. He died in 1997 of complications from a stroke.

THE DEFENSE Before going into management, Parker would dress up as Santa Claus at Christmastime and give puppies to children.

QUOTE "He got a helluva kick out of getting someone to pick up the check. Or out of just beating you in a deal — any kind of deal." — Country guitarist Chet Atkins

9
BEYOND THE PALE

White People
Exploitation, discrimination, appropriation

RAP SHEET Let's just say you wouldn't want to run into them in a dark alley. At least, not if you're one of the many black musicians who were plagiarized, discriminated against and exploited by white rockers and executives. For example:

- Led Zeppelin stole songs from Willie Dixon and Howlin' Wolf, adapting Wolf's "Killing Floor" into "The Lemon Song."
- Until the mid-'60s, execs omitted pictures of many black artists from albums for fear of offending audiences.
- White artists from Pat Boone to Vanilla Ice have diluted black styles and sold the results to a mass white market.

Vanilla Ice's pretend gang sign — he stole that too!

THE DEFENSE In 1987, Zeppelin settled with Dixon, admitting lyric theft and paying him royalties. Recently, the White Stripes have loudly credited Blind Willie McTell for songs of his they've covered.

QUOTE "You get caught only when you're successful. That's the game." — Robert Plant

Clockwise from top left: John Jay; Corbis; Kobal Collection; Michael Wilfling/Vanit de/Retna Ltd.; Evan Vucci/Reuters/Newscom

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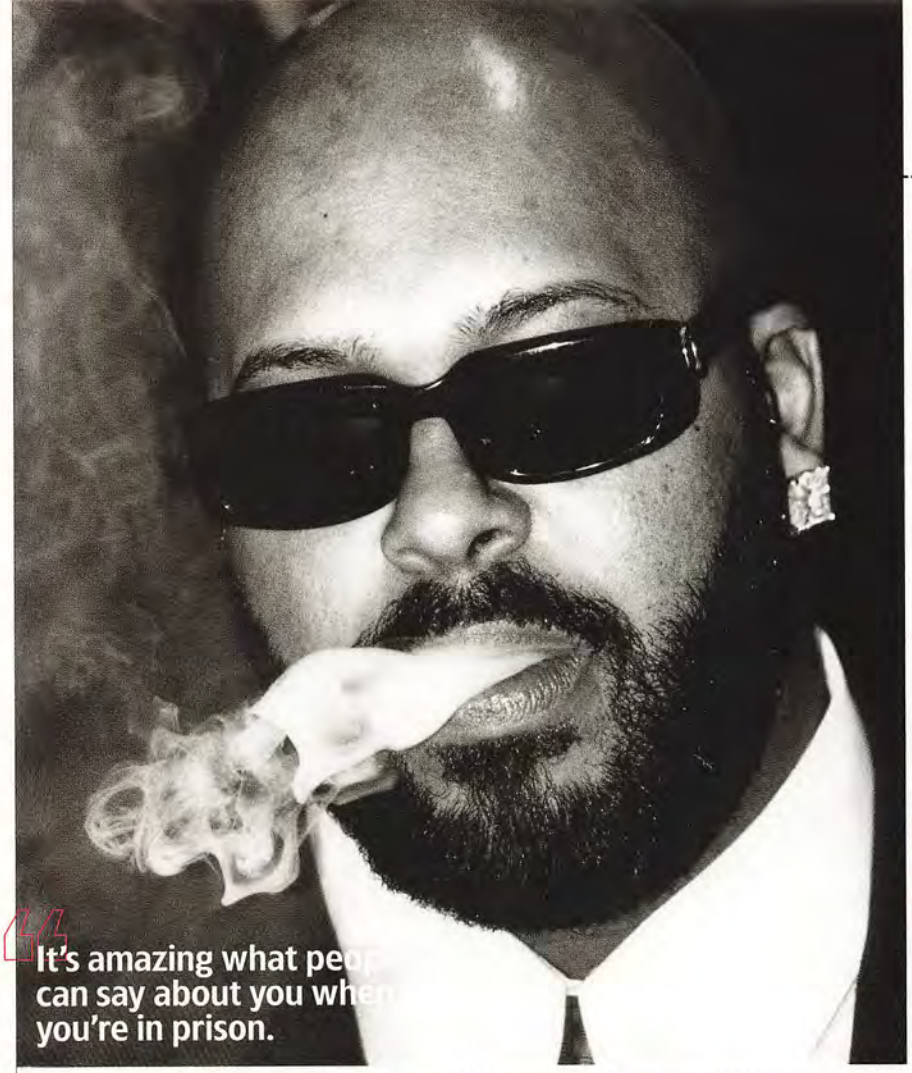

"It's amazing what peo[ple] can say about you when you're in prison.

8
HIP-HOP HOODLUM

Suge Knight

Put the *gangsta* in gangsta rap

RAP SHEET The CEO of Death Row Records (now Tha Row) has a reputation for his intimidating business practices, which are even more substantial than the ex-footballer's six-foot-two, 300-pound frame. In 1992, former N.W.A rapper and Ruthless Records head Eazy-E alleged that Knight had threatened him with a baseball bat while "negotiating" to get Eazy's bandmate Dr. Dre out of his Ruthless contract. Knight denied the accusation, though Eazy got no compensation when the contract was broken.

A brawl in a Las Vegas hotel put Knight in the slammer from 1996 to 2001. Nick Broomfield's recent documentary *Biggie & Tupac* implicated Knight in the murder of Tupac Shakur — a charge he strongly denies.

Knight with supermodel Beverly Deele

THE DEFENSE Prompted by a news item he saw while imprisoned, Knight donated $21,000 to rebuild a vandalized inner-city playground in Sacramento, California.

QUOTE "I'm God's child, and God always tells the truth. Those stories are full of lies. . . . It's amazing what people can say about you when you're in prison."

7
CENSORESS IN CHIEF

Tipper Gore

Made Dee Snider sound like Lenny Bruce

RAP SHEET In 1985, when Elizabeth "Tipper" Gore heard her daughter's copy of Prince's *Purple Rain,* the future vice-presidential wife flew into a rage that prompted the creation of the Parents' Music Resource Center, an activist group devoted to pressuring the record industry not to sell such "pornography" to children. Aided by religious rightists like Pat Robertson, the PMRC endorsed the specious notion that naughty music promotes social ills, and encouraged companies to affix warning labels on "offensive" albums.

THE DEFENSE The PMRC sparked surreal Congressional hearings in 1985 at which Frank Zappa, John Denver and Dee Snider defended their lyrics.

QUOTE "What if the next bunch of Washington wives demands a large yellow *J* on all material written or performed by Jews, in order to save helpless children from exposure to concealed Zionist doctrine?" — Zappa, addressing the U.S. Senate

6
PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

Morris Levy

Ripped off innumerable songwriters

RAP SHEET A legendary shyster, Levy established a record company, Roulette, in 1956, and owned several nightclubs, including New York's Birdland. But his real money came from his devious music-publishing practices. The entrepreneur preyed on poor and needy songwriters, buying tunes for as little as $15 and often crediting himself as the primary songwriter.

Levy even ripped off John Lennon, releasing an unauthorized album that featured three covers by the former Beatle. His career ended in 1988, when he was convicted of extortion along with a Genovese family mob underboss. He died two years after his conviction holding a total of 35,000 copyrights.

THE DEFENSE Was the United Jewish Appeal's man of the year in 1973.

QUOTE "Morris gave me back the demo, bent in half, and told me if his name wasn't on it, the song didn't come out." — Songwriter Ritchie Cordell

5
THE DEVIL'S DANDRUFF

Cocaine

Trashed careers, personalities, nostrils

RAP SHEET By accumulating dopamine in the brain, cocaine makes the dedicated user obsessive and hyperactive. During the periods of its greatest popularity (the mid-'70s and the late '80s), artists and producers spent millions of dollars fattening songs with overdubs only dogs could hear. The result? Ornate but lousy albums like the Eagles' *The Long Run,* Aerosmith's *Night in the Ruts* and, recently, Oasis's *Be Here Now.*

The list of musicians whose deaths were at least partly attributable to coke abuse includes Blind Melon's Shannon Hoon, the Pretenders' James Honeymoon Scott and the Who's John Entwistle. Meanwhile, crack, cocaine's more destructive cousin, helped destroy the careers of Sly Stone and David Crosby, to name but two.

THE DEFENSE Was the chief stimulant behind Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* and most disco records.

QUOTE "When I fly over the Alps, I think, 'That's like all the cocaine I sniffed.' " — Elton John

Clockwise from top left: Thabo Jaiyesimi/Camera Press/Retna Ltd.; Arnold Turner/WireImage.com; Lester Lefkowitz/Corbis; Alphonse Telymonde; Timothy A. Clary/AFP/Newscom

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4
BAD DAD

The Rev. Marvin Gay

Killed his son, Marvin Gaye

RAP SHEET A storefront preacher and the father of the soul legend (who changed the spelling of his surname to Gaye), Gay frequently beat his offspring for the slightest infraction.

In 1984, the singer, nearly broke and deep in a drug-induced paranoia, was forced to move into his parents' Los Angeles home. That April 1, he attacked his father for verbally abusing his mother. The reverend responded by shooting his son. Marvin Jr. had given his father the gun as a gift four months earlier; he was killed instantly. Gay was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and sentenced to five years' probation. He died at age 84 on October 17, 1998.

THE DEFENSE Doctors examining Gay after his arrest discovered a large tumor at the base of his brain — a possible explanation for his erratic behavior.

QUOTE "Let's say that I didn't dislike him." — Gay, when asked during an interview if he loved his son

3
STONE CRAZY

Hell's Angels

Altamont assailants

RAP SHEET The moment that secured the Angels' place in rock infamy occurred in 1969, when the Rolling Stones hired them to provide security for their free show at Northern California's Altamont Speedway. The Angels kept order by beating audience members with pool cues and knocking down Marty Balin, the lead singer of opening act Jefferson Airplane, when he objected to their behavior.

Later, as the Stones played "Sympathy for the Devil," several Angels stabbed to death a young black man named Meredith Hunter after he allegedly taunted them with a gun — an incident captured on film in *Gimme Shelter*.

THE DEFENSE Sonny Barger, the president of the Angels' Oakland chapter, contends that Hunter's death was the Stones' fault.

QUOTE "All that shit about Altamont being the end of an era was a bunch of intellectual crap." — Barger

2
HUSBAND FROM HELL

Ike Turner

Tina's not-so-better half

RAP SHEET Although an influential figure in early rock & roll, Izear Luster Turner is far more infamous for his brutal treatment of his onetime wife and performing partner, Tina, than for his music.

According to Tina, Ike first beat her with a shoe tree, later moving on to "anything that was handy." Tina's suffering — Ike once stuck a lit cigarette up her nose — was not rewarded with fidelity; he later admitted that he had at least a hundred girlfriends during their marriage. By the '70s, he was addicted to cocaine. "If I thought he was bad before," Tina said, "the cocaine started making him evil." She left him in 1976; he later beat his son, Ike Jr., with a cocked .45.

THE DEFENSE Ike claims he "never beat Tina," but he's been contradicted by many witnesses — and, most damningly, by his autobiography.

QUOTE "It was like a horror movie. A horror movie with no intermissions." — Tina, on life with Ike

And Finally, Rock's Most Dastardly Villain

1
BEATLEMANIAC

SERVING 20 TO LIFE!

Mark David Chapman

The man who killed John Lennon

RAP SHEET On Saturday, December 6, 1980, British DJ Andy Peebles interviewed John Lennon and Yoko Ono to publicize their new album *Double Fantasy*. The record was Lennon's first in half a decade, but as he told Peebles, "We've already got half the next album, and we'll probably go in just after Christmas and do that. We're already talking about the ideas for the third. I can't wait."

It wasn't to be. Two days later, outside the Dakota, his apartment building on Manhattan's Upper West Side, Lennon was shot five times with a .38-caliber short-barreled revolver. He was rushed to nearby St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital, but was declared dead at 11:07 P.M.

The man with his finger on the trigger was Mark David Chapman. Born in 1955 in Fort Worth, Texas, Chapman was a delusional depressive who relied on the advice of an imaginary group of "little people." Once a big Beatles fan, he had come to believe that Lennon was "a phony" after reading an interview he gave to *Newsweek* earlier in 1980. Borrowing $5,000 from his father-in-law, Chapman flew to New York from his home in Honolulu and waited for his chance.

"I was sitting inside the arch of the Dakota building," he later recalled. "I see this limousine pull up. The door opened. John got out. He walked past me. I took five steps toward the street, turned, withdrew my gun and fired five shots into his back. He never saw it coming."

In August 1981, after pleading guilty to second-degree murder, Mark David Chapman was sentenced to 20 years to life in prison. His first parole application was rejected in 2000.

THE DEFENSE Chapman was a fan of J.D. Salinger's classic novel *The Catcher in the Rye* and had a copy in his possession when he shot Lennon.

QUOTE "The little people all kind of worshiped me. Sometimes, when I'd get mad, I'd blow some of them up."

Mark David Chapman in police custody, December 9, 1980

Clockwise from top left: Bettmann/Corbis; no credit; Corbis; AFP/Corbis

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GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS

DODGE

IT'S A BIG FAT JUICY CHEESEBURGER IN A LAND OF TOFU.

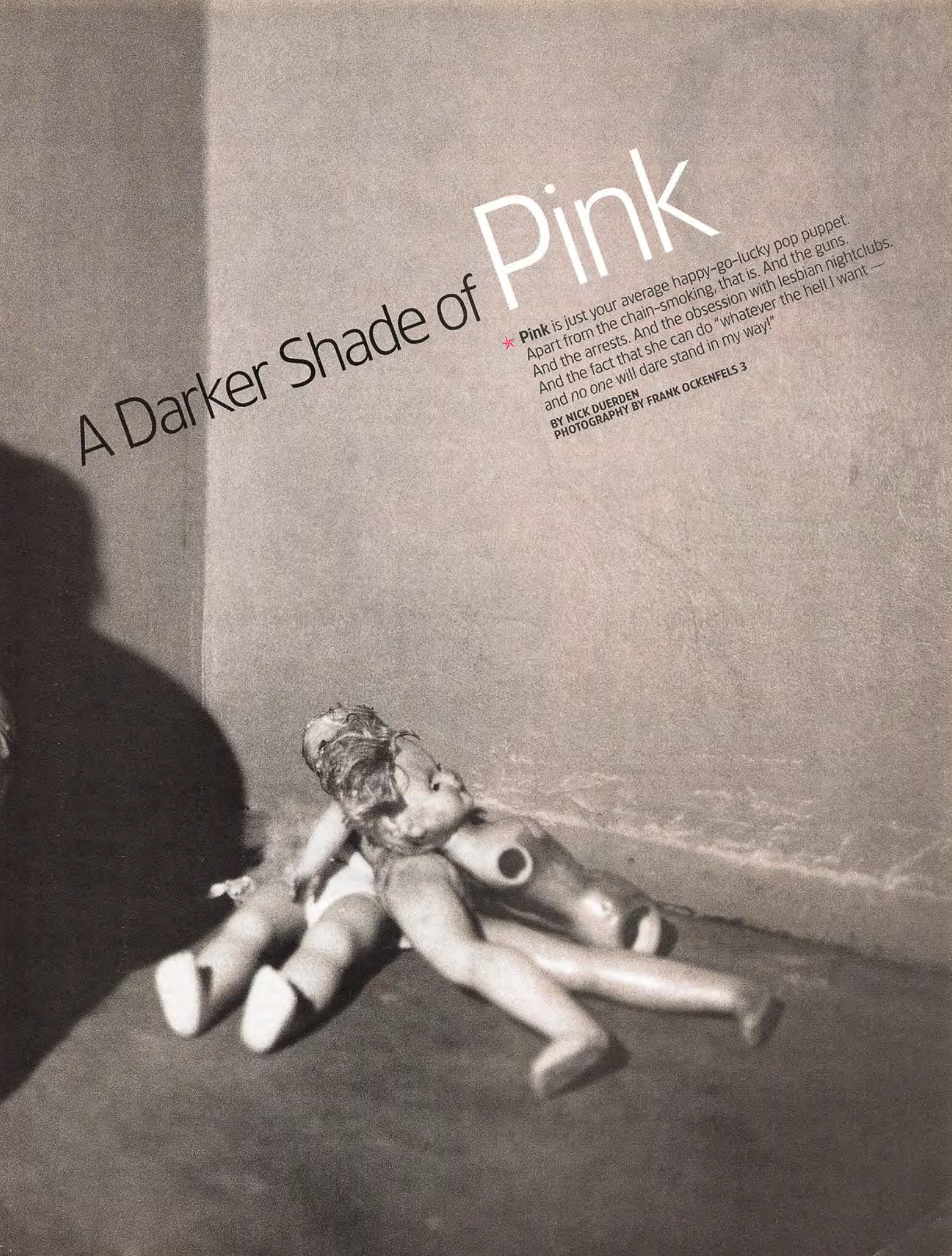
*Depending on model and when properly equipped.

Now, Pink, try
to be a bit
more careful
with this one!

A Darker Shade of Pink

Pink is just your average happy-go-lucky pop puppet. Apart from the chain-smoking, that is. And the guns. And the arrests. And the obsession with lesbian nightclubs. And the fact that she can do "whatever the hell I want — and *no one* will dare stand in my way!"

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK OCKENFELS 3



DURING HER 23 years on Earth, Pink has possessed only two firearms.

"My first was when I was younger and going out to clubs on my own," she says. "Before I got wise and realized gay clubs were the best place a single girl could go, I went to regular ones, and I always got so much hassle. It could get pretty frightening, so I wanted protection. Carrying a loaded gun made me feel safe."

She got the second recently, when she moved into her two-bedroom apartment in Venice Beach, California.

"I didn't have any curtains, just a lot of glass windows and glass doors. It's a shady-ass area, and I felt very visible, very insecure. I asked a friend if I could borrow his gun, just in case. It was always within arm's reach."

As soon as the curtains arrived, the gun was history. Although her father and brother love guns and spend their spare time at shooting ranges, Pink claims to loathe them.

"I did shoot one once, when I was really young. The recoil from it sliced my thumb in two. It scared the shit out of me, and made me realize that if I could help it, I didn't want anything to do with them ever again."

Given her temperament — Pink is much more in touch with anger than she is with peace, as you'll see — this can only be a good thing.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IT IS HIGH SUMMER in America, and Pink is on tour supporting Lenny Kravitz. Only she doesn't see it as supporting. "It's more like a doubleheader," she says firmly. "I'm too big to open for anyone these days." *Blender* joins her a week into the nationwide trek, and we're in for a big surprise. Despite her public persona, in which she comes off the very picture of youthful, feisty fun, she is in fact quite the opposite: serious, brooding and enigmatic. Over the next few days, she will rarely smile. Instead, she'll chain-smoke and scowl with alarming frequency. The gray bags under her eyes, caused by insomnia, will grow and swell like storm clouds, and her demeanor will become increasingly maudlin. If she's enjoying any aspect of her life right now, she's doing a very good job concealing it. This is the darker side of Pink.

"Am I grumpy?" she asks, her voice nicotine-stained, deadpan and truck-driver deep. "I'm grumpy, all right. I'm Grumpy Smurf. I can get pretty vicious sometimes. In the last couple of years, what with all the shit going on in the world, I wake up ready for war, ready for someone to do something fucked-up. I want to become more laid-back, but it's difficult."

She gets bored easily on tour, and boredom leads to frustration. "And frustration," she warns, "can turn me poisonous." She burps up a laugh that has little humor in it, and lights the first of the day's many cigarettes, which she smokes in a fashion that would make Greta Garbo applaud from beyond the grave.

"I have no time in my life for weak people."

"I'm not really the party girl when I'm working," she says. "I guess I'm kind of antisocial. Plus I have a habit of pissing people off, especially on this tour, because it's Lenny's, not mine. I refuse to wear my laminate [security pass], and that can get difficult when security doesn't recognize me and tries to escort me off the premises."

Like the teenager she will in so many ways always be, Pink has a problem with authority. She used to hate her parents. She still hates her old teachers, the police, the government — anyone in uniform and in a position of power. She hates flying because of all the "security bullshit." She regards her 11 tattoos as an artful statement against convention. She likes to smoke in no-smoking areas, and she dislikes keeping appointments, because the only time she wants to run on is Pink time — which, inevitably, is later than everyone else's.

She grins, revealing small, perfect teeth. "It's fun pissing people off, and it's gotten really interesting since becoming famous, because now people are scared of me. I piss them off but they don't come back at me, just in case, because of who I am. That's really funny. It's gotten to the stage now where I intimidate by my reputation alone, and that's not necessarily a bad thing. It keeps weak people away from me, and I have no time in my life for weak people."

She looks uncommonly satisfied with herself.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THIS IS A STRANGE and confusing time for the young woman christened Alecia Moore. Since the November 2001 release of her second album, *M!ssundaztood*, she has sold 5 million records worldwide. The album was something of an about-face: Her debut, *Can't Take Me Home*, released a year earlier, was a slick, highly stylized R&B effort masterminded by her record-company boss, Arista's Antonio "L.A." Reid. The public liked it a couple million times over, but Pink decided that an identikit R&B persona wasn't for her. She wanted more control, a different direction. So she looked up an old hero of hers, Linda Perry from early-'90s one-hit wonders 4 Non Blondes, and they began to collaborate on songs that were more confessional, more rock & roll. *M!ssundaztood* was the result. Her label protested the change in direction at first, but the album's 14 tracks suggest that Pink is the heretofore unknown missing link among Madonna, Britney Spears, Alanis Morissette and Gwen Stefani.

Lyrically, meanwhile, like Axl Rose and Kurt Cobain before her, Pink was becoming a master of self-loathing. *M!ssundaztood*'s buoyant lead single, "Get the Party Started," proved a sole →

Styling: Trish Summerville, makeup: Susan McCarthy for Judy Casey, hair: Alberto Guzman for Bumble + Bumble/Judy Casey

And this is what she wears to do the dishes!

DRESS FROM **RETAIL SLUT, LA**. EARRINGS AND NECKLACE FROM **JENNIFER KAUFMAN, LA**. BOOTS FROM **FREDERICK'S OF HOLLYWOOD**. BRACELET AND RING BY **STANLEY GUESS**. SPIKE CUFF FROM **RETAIL SLUT, LA**

optimistic high point; otherwise, the follow-up hits "Just Like a Pill" ("Lying here on the floor where you left me/I think I took too much/I'm crying here, what have you done?") and "Don't Let Me Get Me" ("Every day I fight a war against the mirror/Can't take the person staring back at me/I'm a hazard to myself") appeared very bitter indeed.

"I've always loved myself," she says backstage at Detroit's DTE Energy Music Theater, one hour and six cigarettes before showtime. "I always thought I was cool, but I've had a problem with self-respect. I'm not sure why, just like I'm not sure why everything gets me so angry. I guess I was born with this bug, inherited from my dad. But anger is good, and I hope people look up to that aspect of me."

Blender gazes into the rapidly filling auditorium and suggests that her demons are precisely what sets her apart from her more chipper musical peers.

Pink reams out whichever joker replaced her hair dryer with a megaphone.

She acknowledges the compliment. "Five million albums," she responds, spreading out the fingers and thumb of her right hand. "I can do whatever the hell I want now, and no one will dare stand in my way."

At two minutes after 8 P.M., she and her five-piece band take to the stage and plow through 50 minutes of feisty, up-front and proudly dysfunctional rock-chick anthems. By the time she recounts being arrested as a teenager in her native Philadelphia for busking — "I knew every cop by name!" — she has the crowd in the palm of her hand. Her version of 4 Non Blondes' only hit, "What's Up," features 15,000 people on backing vocals. The show is an unequivocal triumph.

All of which is of little consequence. Throughout the set, Pink looks miserable, as if she's going through the motions with no enthusiasm. After the final chord of "Don't Let Me Get Me," she runs off-stage, down a ramp and onto her tour bus. She hides herself in a room at the back; although there is no DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door, the message is implicit: Pink wishes to be alone, until Cleveland at the very least.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, some unexpected good news arrives. The Cleveland show has been postponed; Lenny Kravitz has lost his voice. It will be a day before he finds it. Eschewing the many splendors of the city's downtown — shopping mall! Six-screen cinema! Rock and Roll Hall of Fame! — Pink hotfoots it to the airport and boards a plane for Las Vegas, the home of 27-year-old freestyle motocross star Carey Hart, her boyfriend of eight months.

"I can't function too long without seeing him," she had said the day before, in a rare moment of good cheer. "We're at that stage where we need to see each other regularly. I like the attention he gives me, and right now I'm his puppy dog. I need to be fed and petted and washed and looked after, and he's very good at telling me how wonderful I am."

Despite being "crazy in love," Pink has no plans to move in with Hart.

"No way! We could never live together!" she blurts, so startled at the notion that she spills chamomile tea down the front of her shirt.

"Things get fucked up when you live together," she asserts, patting herself with tissues. "I was with my last boyfriend for five years, and when we started living together, it was terrible. In fact, the whole relationship was terrible; living together just made it worse. I'm not going down that road again." →

Pop Quiz!

Hey, **Pink**, which do you prefer: cats or dogs? Plus 19 more devilishly revealing questions

Cats or dogs?
Dogs.

T or A?
Ass.

Lennon or McCartney?
Lennon. →

Innie or outtie?
[*Checks*] Innie.

Letterman or Leno?
If I say Leno, do I get all his cars and motorbikes?

Britney or Christina?
Pass.

Boxers or briefs?
Boxers, every time.

Morning person or night owl?
Night owl.

Paris or Nicky Hilton?
[*Feigns retching*] Paris, I guess, if I had to choose.

Chicken or fish?
Fish, although I hate the smell. So chicken. No, fish.

Spit or swallow?
Oh. My. God. *Ewww!* That's disgusting. I don't do that.

On top or on bottom?
On the bottom! Definitely! I'm too lazy to go on top.

Starsky or Hutch? →
Who? [*After a brief explanation of the TV show*] I was born in 1979, remember!

'N Sync or Backstreet?
'N Sync, of course!

Jack or Kelly Osbourne?
Kelly.

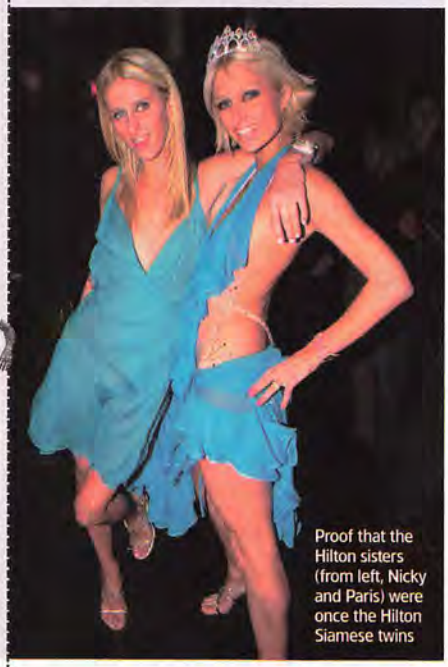
***Maxim* or *Stuff*?**
This is a difficult one. *Stuff* has always supported me, but *Maxim* is funny as shit. Can I say both?

Shave or wax?
Shave.

Your place or mine?
Mine, naturally. →

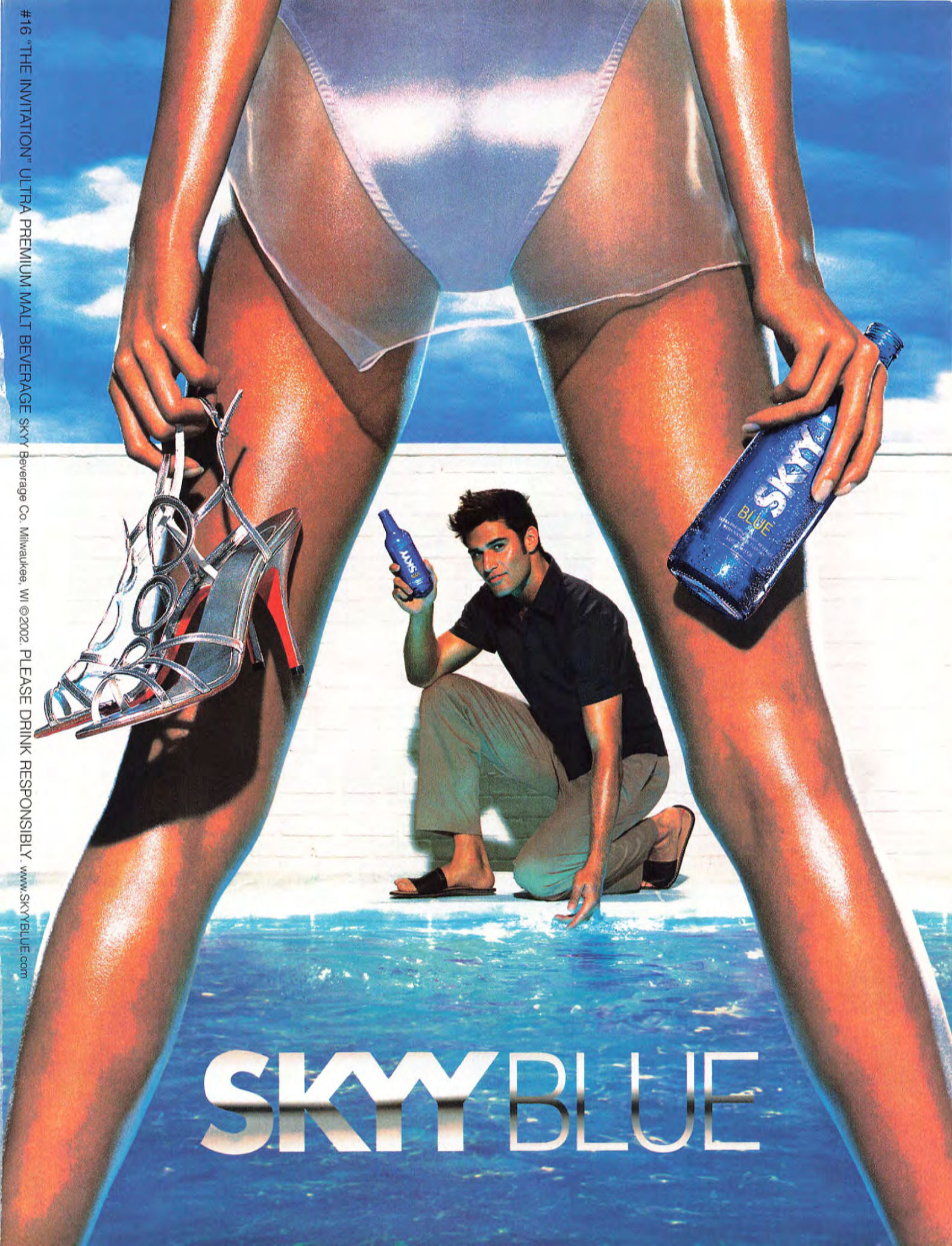
Mary-Kate or Ashley Olsen?
No way! Neither, neither! Never, ever!

Black or white?
[*Thinks for more than a minute*] Pink!



Proof that the Hilton sisters (from left, Nicky and Paris) were once the Hilton Siamese twins

Top: Ethan Miller/Image Direct. Pop Quiz!, clockwise from top right: Alphonse Telymonde; Jeff Vespa/WireImage.com; Neal Peters Collection; Bob Gruen/Starfile; Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com



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But things could be different this time. Different boyfriend, different experiences.

"No, no! Mistakes recur; I know that from experience. Things are going well, and I don't want to fuck them up. I've got a great boyfriend, I wear the pants in the relationship and I make more money than him, which is as it should be [*laughs fiendishly*]. I'm happy the way things are, thank you."

Are you a loyal girlfriend?

"I'm very faithful in relationships — not necessarily because I'm a good person, but mostly because I hate meeting new people. I just find it all so boring, that whole getting-to-know-you process. I can't be bothered with it. Plus I'm not very good at letting people into my inner circle." She shrugs. "Trust issues, you know? For me, the best part of a relationship is when you're able to slob out together. By the time you get to that stage, you're no longer worrying whether he's sleeping with his ex."

Some people would say that's a very negative viewpoint.

She shrugs again. "So shoot me."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Is it just me, or is there a draft in here?"

PINK ALWAYS WANTED to be a rock star. Born a sickly child who suffered repeatedly from ear infections, asthma and even pneumonia, she grew up in working-class Philadelphia, in an area she now describes as a "war zone." Her mother, father, brother and sister argued constantly. After her parents divorced when she was 7, she lived, rather stormily, with her mother, Judith. The breaking point came when Pink turned 15: Her mother kicked her out of the house. She went to live with her father, Jim Moore, a strict disciplinarian, but things weren't much better there.

"We've all reconciled now," she says. "My dad and I are the best of friends. We talk every day. It's good." And her mother? "My mother and I . . . " She pauses, and rolls her eyes back in her head. "We have an understanding. I love her very much, but I don't agree with who she is. Then again, I'm sure she doesn't agree with who I am, either. We accept each other from a distance."

The wounds, she explains, can never completely heal — because while Pink is able to forgive, she cannot forget. She discusses her tempestuous relationship with her mother in interviews and writes about it in her songs. On the *M!ssundaztood* track "My Vietnam," she sings, "Mama was a lunatic/She liked to push my buttons/She said I wasn't good enough," and on "Family Portrait," she begs, "Mama please stop crying/I can't stand the sound/Your pain is painful/And it's tearing me down."

★ "I need to be fed and petted and washed and looked after."

"How about next time we try putting our tongues *in* each other's mouths?": with boyfriend Carey Hart

"I have done a lot of apologizing to her over the years, but the truth is the truth, and you can't run from the truth," Pink says. "My logic is this: If I hurt, shouldn't you? I do feel bad when she reads articles in which I've said nasty things about her, but fuck, Mom, it happened. What should I do? Lie?"

Recently, her mother decided to hit back by giving an interview to the *National Enquirer* in which she attempted to set matters straight by painting her daughter as an obnoxious, hellish problem child.

Pink shakes her head, takes a long drag on her cigarette and looks forlorn. "The *National Enquirer*. Kind of lame, huh? What can I tell you? My family is a regular soap opera."

By the time she hit her mid-teens, Pink was suffering from two addictions: a Jon Bon Jovi obsession, and drugs ("but not heroin — I was scared of needles"). She was playing with a Philadelphia punk band, convinced that music, not school, was her eventual escape route.

"I always thought being in a band looked like such fun," she says. "A bunch of friends traveling cross-country in a van, broke as shit, getting to each venue on skateboards, laughing and joking and having the time of your life. It's all I ever wanted." ➔

From top: Frank Ockenfels 3; Jon Shapiro/ESPN

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And now that you have it . . . ?

"If anything, I'm more confused than ever."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IT'S A BALMY Wednesday evening in Cleveland. In the vast Blossom Music Center, Pink, fresh from her restorative trip to see the boyfriend, is sitting cross-legged on the floor eating fish and broccoli — a task she insists is difficult because of the smell.

"Fish stinks, doesn't it? And is it me, or does broccoli smell like ass?"

She's laughing much more than she has over the past few days, and in the occasional stolen moment, she looks almost content. She insists, though, that for myriad reasons, she's still struggling. The bags under her eyes are more pronounced than ever, and she says her insomnia is driving her mad. *Blender* offers her some melatonin, but she turns it down, saying she no longer likes to take any kind of pill. She also recently banished alcohol from her life.

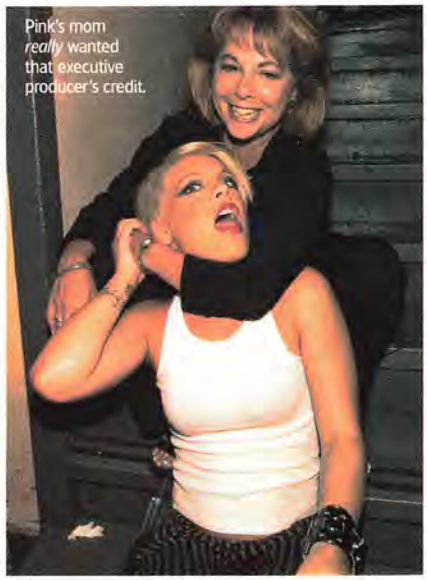
"I have stomach ulcers, and alcohol only irritates them," she says. "I hated beer until I turned 19, and then I loved it. I absolutely live for beer, but I can't drink it now. Basically, all I can do these days is enjoy the occasional glass of wine. How fucked up is that?" She shakes her head and reaches, mid-meal, for a cigarette. "This is about the only vice I have left. A pack a day since I was 9. I know I should stop smoking as well, but it scares me. I mean, what would I turn to next?"

As seen on the checkout line

Around the door pops her personal assistant Laura Wilson, whom Pink occasionally refers to as "Sweet Tits." "We've got to get you ready for the show," Wilson says.

Thirty minutes later, Pink is dressed and ready to perform. She looks arresting rather than alluring in a tight white vest, low-slung jeans and a mess of key chains that trail down toward her knees. All this makes her look rather — how best to put it? — rather butch.

↑ "Come on, give me a drag, Dad!": A young Pink dances with her father


Pink's mom *really* wanted that executive producer's credit.

"I am butch, aren't I?" she says, grinning. "I'm becoming a gay icon, and I love it. It's probably my short hair and attitude. I'm happy with that. All my female friends are gay, and I go to gay clubs. I don't want to sound stereotypical, because all girls are different, but I like gay girls because, like me, they're strong, not easily intimidated, they're tomboys and they like to play pool."

Have you ever wondered whether you might be gay?

"I don't know. Maybe? I did kiss a girl once. I was 13 years old. It was nice, but she left me for my brother, which is pretty sick, don't you think?" She starts laughing. "Fucking bitch! It was probably her who put me off women! Also, I think it was disgusting of my brother to kiss the same girl I did, because it was almost as if I was kissing him. *Ewww*, gross!

"I don't think I have sexual feelings toward women," she goes on. "I just like them as friends. And anyway, I like Carey's *thing* too much, so that pretty much rules out the whole lesbian thing, doesn't it?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, an unused nightclub space in downtown Chicago, the *Blender* photo shoot. Pink is seated on a small wooden chair having her nails buffed, her hair styled and foundation applied to her cheeks. The makeup is so heavy around her eyes, you almost feel sorry for the weight her lids have to carry. Discussion of the previous night's sour mood is neatly, and diplomatically, sidestepped in favor of a conversation about sex. Pink wants a definition of *blow-job lips*. *Blender* stutters something along the lines of "full, shiny and wet." Taking this in, she appraises herself in the mirror, runs an appropriately pink tongue across her mouth and grins. "Feeling better already," she says.

But her good mood is short-lived, and she soon reassumes the expression she wore yesterday: the one that says she doesn't want to be here, she doesn't want to be doing this.

"I still don't know what I want to do when I grow up," she concludes. She insists that she finds her current vocation unfulfilling, and would be much happier helping people in a more active way. She could be a schoolteacher, maybe, or a social worker.

"Do I want to carry on with this life?" she wonders, her brow creasing. "I don't know. Sometimes I do. But other times I just want to go camping." [BLENDER]

Nipped in the Bud

Pink taped over her nipples in her video for "Just Like a Pill." But was she the first? No!

PINK: POPALICIOUS

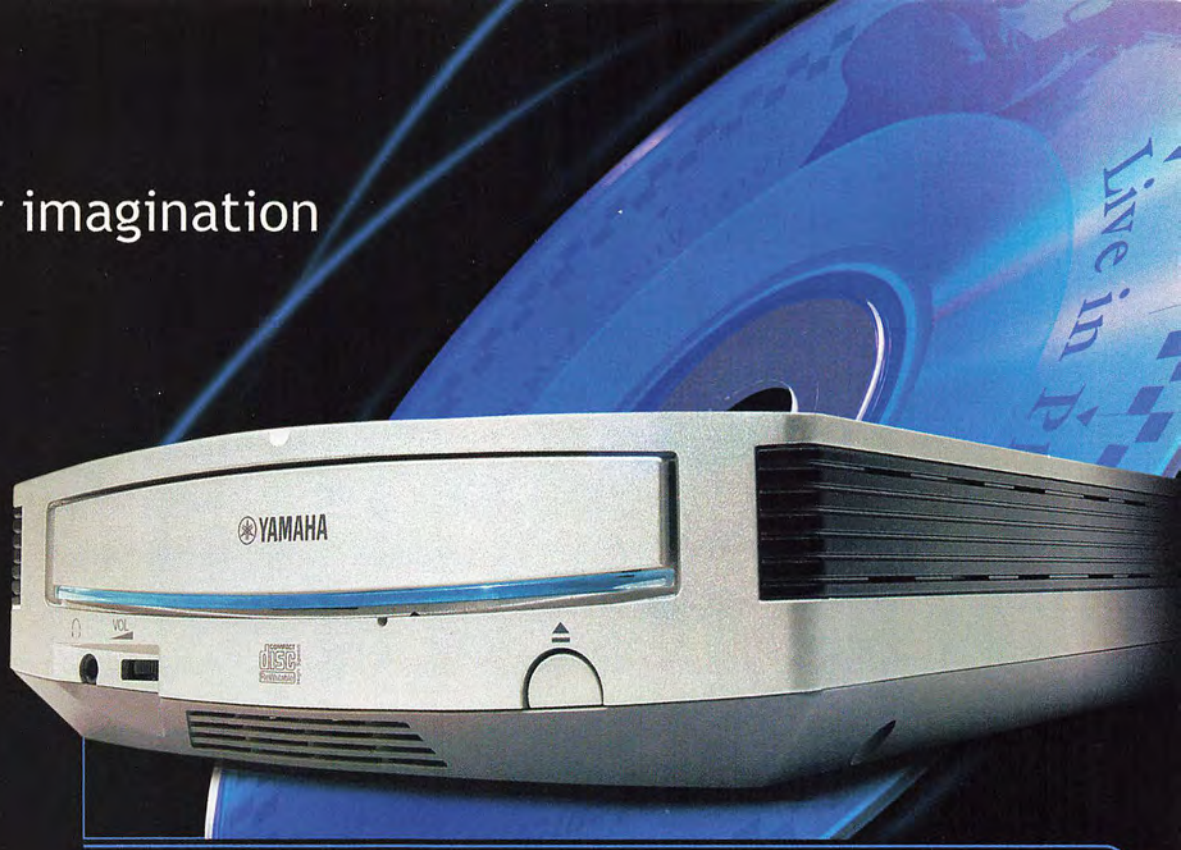
LIL' KIM: RAPALICIOUS

WENDY O. WILLIAMS: PUNKALICIOUS

POISON'S C.C. DEVILLE: MISSING THE POINT

Clockwise from top left: courtesy of Arista; Kevin Mazur/Wireimage.com; Sol Tucker/Pointed Magazine; Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis Outline; Reuters/New Media Inc./Corbis, no credit; Alphonse Telymonde (still-life)

stretch your imagination



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The Guide

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RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

The shirtless funk-metal veterans rock Ellis Island in support of the victims of September 11, p150

George Tricker

Loser in Love

Slacker gets his heart broken, comes back strong. Photograph by Peggy Sirota

BECK
SEA CHANGE
✪✪✪✪
GEFFEN

WHO IS THIS GUY? And what has he done with Beck? What happened to the irony chef? Do Beck's label, his mother and his accountant know he's suddenly been replaced by a sincere singer-songwriter?

What an improbable change. On his last CD, 1999's *Midnite Vultures*, Beck played a kitschy lounge crooner. Every song, every white-funk groove, was one more genuine fake-zirconium bauble. Beck was on the verge of turning into the guy Adam Sandler played in *The Wedding Singer*, unable to distinguish his real feelings from his artificial ones. But on *Sea Change*, he wears his guts on his sleeve, offering one stark, gorgeously sad song after another. It's the first time he's sung a batch of consistently linear lyrics and aimed them directly at an audience. Suddenly, he doesn't act as though "sincerity" is the biggest joke of all.

The rumor in Los Angeles, the 32-year-old's hometown, is that his transformation began with an e-mail. Beck opened what he thought was a message to him; it turned out to be a love note from another man to Beck's longtime live-in girlfriend. (*Blender* recommends: individual accounts.) The feelings that spilled forth are what *Sea Change* is about: loneliness, abandonment, starting over.

The first two songs, "The Golden Age" and "Paper Tiger," describe driving alone in the desert, feeling the wind in your eyes and learning things about yourself you never wanted to know. "Round the Bend" and "Side of the Road" continue the mood of rootless motion. The lyrics are surprisingly frank for a musician who on his seven previous records has been a faux-rapper, faux-folkie and faux-rocker, and seemed willing to become a fogy before he ever told you exactly how he was feeling.

Stark and sad, *Sea Change* is a great record to play at 3 A.M.

These songs sound acoustic at heart, like folk music that's been run through some very ominous machinery. Subtly slick musical touches (from Radiohead's producer, Nigel Godrich, who also produced Beck's *Mutations*) get folded in, including plush strings and '70s-era synthesizers. These uncommercial flourishes give a vaguely synthetic, creepy feel to what is, at its core, almost acoustic music. This is folk gone perverse, like a harmonica dipped in Vaseline.

Beck is channeling a few heavy ghosts. The unearthly '60s British folk singer Nick Drake hovers over one shoulder, especially when Beck sets his voice against layers of strings and acoustic bass. On the other shoulder sits cosmic cowboy Gram Parsons, whose wide-open-spaces country-rock echoes throughout. Beck, fortunately, also has L.A. pop legend Jon Brion on hand. Brion, a low-key multi-instrumentalist, has brought out the best in other moody songwriters (Rufus Wainwright, Elliott Smith, Aimee Mann); no doubt he helped Beck relax, put persona aside and trust his songs.

For a supposedly easygoing and cool Californian, Beck certainly drives himself hard and holds tightly to secrets. He gives away nothing in interviews, tours his ass off and has released a huge amount of music in the nine years since "Loser" made him a reluctant slacker icon. It's not in his character to cry on anybody's shoulder, and while the vibe of *Sea Change* is one of depression, he's ultimately as focused as ever — there's no primal screaming here, just a sense that things are going to get better, that a new beginning is out there in the desert somewhere.

When Frank Sinatra broke up with a broad, he'd punch somebody, wreck his car and move on. Beck keeps his cool. No dame is going to throw him off his game. Hard work and discipline got him where he is, and even with a broken heart, they're what he'll stick with, not confession or therapy.

And he's far too restless to linger in this heartbreak stage. He's already cut another album's worth of material with ace DJ Dan "the Automator" Nakamura of Gorillaz.

The Automator is no stranger to a smirk, so don't expect Beck's sulk to last long. Enjoy *Sea Change* as an anomaly — a great record to play at 3 A.M., and a lesson in how useful it can be for anybody, especially a control freak, to have his music and his life turned upside down. *RJ SMITH*

Beck His Life in CDs

MELLOW GOLD
GEFFEN, 1994
✪✪✪✪
Elflike folk hopeful gets his butt kicked in New York, returns home to L.A., throws away his ambition, makes a self-indulgent record and ends up with the debut of the decade: suburban blues, noise and a freak hit ("Loser") that he'll spend years disowning.

STEREOPATHETIC SOULMANURE
FLIPSIDE, 1994
✪✪✪
In a too-much-too-soon move, Beck, anointed the New Dylan by critics, tries to keep it real with this post-"Loser" indie release. The jokes are studiedly cryptic, the country songs fall apart gorgeously and the untitled last track is twisted noise — the sound of a celebrity hiding his head under his pillow.

ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE
K, 1994
✪✪
Released at the same time as SSM, and recorded mostly with indie-rock naif Calvin Johnson. Features plenty of Delta blues — and also "Asshole," a song Tom Petty later covered.

ODELAY
GEFFEN, 1996
✪✪✪✪✪
Ambition returns with a vengeance — produced by the Dust Brothers, this is sample-happy pop art, crowned by a Grammy Award. "The New Pollution" and "Where It's At" are whoopie cushions full of hip-hop beats and deadpan jokes, delivered in the voice of a rapper who'd just gotten out of bed.

MUTATIONS
GEFFEN, 1998
✪✪✪
Another willful retreat from stardom. From country to bossa nova, with a range as big as Beck's record collection, these brooding art ballads are full of frills, not hooks.

MIDNITE VULTURES
GEFFEN, 1999
✪✪
Liberace lives! And shakes his *azz*! Full of fake R&B ("Sexx Laws," "Get Real Paid"), it's his worst record. *RJ SMITH*

Beck in his short-lived "cabin boy" period

ALCAZAR

CASINO ✪✪✪

RCA

Julia Roberts's ex-trainer and his lady pals fashion a retro-disco confection

Alcazar are Swedes Andreas Lundstedt, Annikafiore and Tess. However, the real stars of their delightfully frivolous debut are various dance-music classics of the last 25 years. The single "Crying at the Discoteque" is an homage to Chic's immortal "I Want Your Love," from 1978 — and it includes a typically inscrutable lyric: "The golden years, the silver tears, you wore a tie like Richard Gere." Huh? Although most of *Casino* is in thrall to the greatest hits of Studio 54, "Trans-metropolis" revolves around the same mournful three-note bass riff as Haddaway's 1993 Eurodance cheese chestnut "What Is Love." If you find yourself twitching your head to Alcazar like the club guidos in *Night at the Roxbury*, don't fret — you're only human. *ROB KEMP*

THE SCORE

✪✪✪✪✪ EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

✪✪✪✪ GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

✪✪✪ VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

✪✪ JUST OK

✪ WEAK

BASTARD SONS OF JOHNNY CASH

DISTANCE BETWEEN ✪✪✪

ULTIMATUM MUSIC

Alt-country foursome honors its symbolic dad

What would Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash be without their own version of "Long Black Veil," the ancient country ballad Cash stunningly made his own in the mid-'60s? Here, the San Diego quartet takes the murderous tale and makes it spookier, aided by bandleader Mark Stuart's smoky voice and a mix that lets background vocals and pedal-steel guitar hover like ghosts. The Bastards make "Veil" and other stand-outs ("Burn Down," "Beautiful Cage," the title track) only vaguely beautiful, preferring to keep the proceedings beer-soaked and earthy, which makes this alt-country more faithful to true country than most. *CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR*

His name is Beenie Man. He wears a Beenie!

DANIEL BEDINGFIELD

GOTTA GET THRU THIS ✪✪✪

ISLAND

Sounding like Michael Jackson, dazzling New Zealander steals the U.K. charts, moves on to world domination

A writer, producer and obvious natural, Daniel Bedingfield rocketed to number 1 in England with "Gotta Get Thru This," a charismatic blipfest of nervous garage rhythms offset by the kind of fancy chords usually heard on expensive L.A. pop sessions. The track, however, was made on the cheap in his London bedroom. With the luxurious "Girlfriend," the slicked-back attitude of "James Dean" and a piece of weekend enthusiasm called "Friday" that offers the luminous éclat of '70s candy-dancers K.C. & the Sunshine Band, New Zealand–born Bedingfield, 22, continues his ultracatchy streak. Surrounding these are sentimental ballads of such high formal achievement that no one should blink when Bedingfield grabs an international diva like Celine Dion and writes the next five Disney soundtracks. *JAMES HUNTER*

BEENIE MAN

TROPICAL STORM ✪✪✪

VIRGIN

Album 11 from Grammy-winning reggae don, featuring Janet Jackson

Of all of the urban marketing department's most horrific misfires, rap mixed with reggae is among the worst. But when the genre-splicing's done right, the results can be joyous. Backed up by such serious firepower as Janet Jackson, Lil' Kim and the ridiculously on-form Neptunes, Beenie Man hits the spot repeatedly while dropping hip-hop,

Mad and Bad

Second album from soon-to-be-huge Chicago nü-metal misfits

DISTURBED

BELIEVE ✪✪✪

REPRISE

DAVID "MAD DAVEY" DRAIMAN of Disturbed has always seemed the odd man out among current metal singers. While others exude a goonish charm or display pinup charisma, Draiman is bullish, bald and wears a lot of leather. He's best known for sporting outlandish prongs through his twin lip piercing and for making animal barks and caws throughout the band's debut, 2000's patchy *The Sickness* — which sold 2 million copies and hit an excruciating nadir with a cover of Tears for Fears' primal-scream treatise "Shout."

For all of Draiman's idiosyncrasies, *Believe* is everything a second album should be — it improves on the debut, slightly. The zoological outbursts are gone, and the rap-metal is toned down in favor of Dan Donegan's aggressive riffing and Draiman's more melodic vocals. The subject matter veers from 9/11 and the death of Draiman's grandfather on the first single, "Prayer," to the singer's problems with girls on "Bound." (Perhaps it's the lip piercing.)

Elsewhere, "Liberate" tackles war in the Middle East, a bid by Draiman, who's Jewish, to get serious — although his refrain, "Liberate your mind . . . you motherfucker!", is hardly the substance of deep political thought. Draiman's appearances on *Politically Incorrect* have shown more education and eloquence than this. Musically, *Believe* is as solid as this kind of generic support-slot-on-Ozzfest stuff gets and — thank Christ — at least there's no DJ.

The pace is chopping midtempo heavy rock 101 throughout, except for the final lighter-waving kiss-off, "Darkness," which is awful. Lyrically, Draiman's decision to cast himself as a world-weary people's poet is irritating. Overwhelmingly, though, Disturbed have yet to come to terms with just how average they really are — seldom unlistenable, never inspirational, but consistently merely OK. *BEN MITCHELL*

DAVID DRAIMAN'S CURRENT LISTENING

▶ NONPOINT
DEVELOPMENT *MCA*

▶ EARSHOT
LETTING GO *WARNER BROS.*

Believe is everything a second album should be.

MINI

NOTHING CORNERS LIKE A MINI. LET'S MOTOR.™

R&B, flamenco, rock and even U.K. garage into the dynamic party mix. Crucially, superfine pop moments "Bad Girl" and the silky single "Feel It Boy," on which Janet guests, never stifle the underlying Jamaican flavor, even if the raw-chatting Beenie sometimes sounds a bit like a guest on his own album.

IAN HARRISON

RUBÉN BLADES

MUNDO ✪✪✪

COLUMBIA

Great salsa singer goes global with mediocre results

It's tough to imagine salsa immortal Rubén Blades, a former Panamanian presidential candidate, belting out "Danny Boy" in an Irish bar, but his Latinized version of that Gaelic tear-jerker is just one stop on this budget trip through the major ports of world music. Blades's global boogie starts off with a rumba bang, but quickly devolves into a salsa-meets-everything fusion vehicle. He's a terrific singer, but his Celtic and Middle Eastern flavors sound like warmed-over Paul Simon on an album that ranges from the rumba rumpus of "Estampa (Profile)" to the quiet ethnic storm, complete with Kenny G.–like soprano sax solos, of nearly everything else. The inevitable didgeridoo — the pan flute of New Age global music — makes its appearance about halfway through the album, with the usual dire results.

RICHARD GEHR

BROKEN SPINDLES

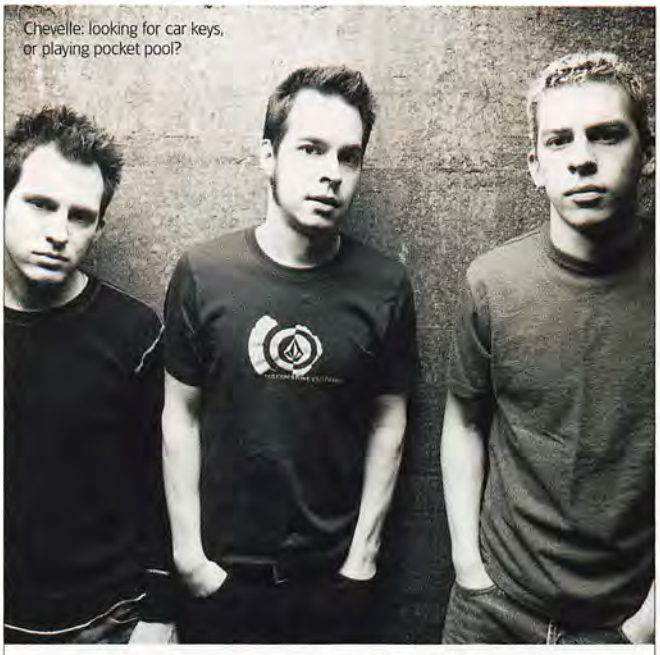
BROKEN SPINDLES ✪✪✪

TIGER STYLE

Cofounder of the Faint, just off a tour with No Doubt, makes beats for goth kids busting a move

Morbid, sex-obsessed narratives are the Faint's standard fare, set to bleeping '80s synthesizers and angular rock riffs. Though he plays bass with the Nebraska neo-wavers, Joel Petersen draws on a wide range of electronica in this solo project: *Broken Spindles'* instrumentals jump from goth-industrial and new wave to disco and house. On "Downtown Venues," he grafts "Get Ur Freak On"–style East Asian percussion onto a jerky pulse, while "Connection in Progress" decorates an intricate groove with clipped bursts of electric guitar and Iron Maiden–style solo crescendos. Petersen also offers a few organ and piano dirges, and an album-closing 14-minute foray into droning atonality, proving that he shouldn't stray far from catchy dance-floor mutations.

JONAH WEINER



Chevelle: looking for car keys, or playing pocket pool?

PETER BRUNTNELL

ENDS OF THE EARTH ✪✪✪✪

BACK PORCH

We've seen the future of American country-rock. And it's British!

A Neil Young–loving singer-songwriter whose fourth album is packed with tales of heartache and pedal-steel guitar from Son Volt's Eric Heywood, Peter Bruntnell is pretty much the definition of the American retro-rocker — apart from the fact that he comes from the London suburbs. That aside, this follow-up to Bruntnell's acclaimed 1999 CD, *Normal for Bridgwater,* should be catnip to alt-country fans left out in the cold by Wilco's newfound weirdness. In fact, opener "Here Come the Swells," four-to-the-floor rocker "Rio Tinto" and the maudlin "One Drink Away" could all have been ripped from the pre-*Summerteeth* Jeff Tweedy songbook. At times, Bruntnell's soft, almost whispered vocals beat out even Tweedy in the heartbreak stakes.

CLARK COLLIS

Cassius display the warmth and charm Frenchmen are known for.

NEKO CASE

BLACKLISTED ✪✪✪

BLOODSHOT

Chicago alt-country singer tries songwriting, with mixed results

Neko Case's voice is the best thing that's ever happened to the intersection of country music and indie pop. She can torch a ballad like a tinderbox, and her thoughtful twang makes any lyric sound fathoms deeper. On her third solo album, the master interpreter is relying mostly on her own dark, subtly bitter material for the first time, while her backing band (including members of southwestern desert folkies Giant Sand) settles into a rich, swampy groove. A well-chosen cover of Aretha Franklin's "Runnin' Out of Fools," though, cuts so deep that it exposes the problem with the rest of the album: Case's own melodies aren't nearly as indelible as the country classics she's emulating.

DOUGLAS WOLK

PETER CASE

BEELINE ✪✪✪

VANGUARD

Ninth solo turn from former Plimsoul who's the perennial voice of the broken-hearted

Part Woody Guthrie, part Keith Richards, Peter Case is a tireless standard-bearer for American songwriting — first in the late '70s with the Nerves, then more notably with the Plimsouls. With his latest solo record, he tackles the aftermath of his divorce, the perils of growing older and, inevitably, September 11. This time, son Joshua is on hand to help with computer-aided sound effects, and the gate-crashing livens up a predictable template: Case's intimate vocals and leisurely strumming on "If You Got a Light to Shine" and "Something's Coming" benefit from the interference. He still caters to devotees of his straighter approach, but *Beeline* comes into its own when things go a little off-message with malfunctioning drum machines and spooky studio noise. Case should slip his leash more often.

CARLO TWIST

CASSIUS

AU REVE ✪✪✪

ASTRALWERKS

***Parles-toi* French dance music?**

Like Daft Punk, Cassius are a Parisian duo who made European pop acceptable through their gleaming dance music and generally aloof, we-know-something-you don't Frenchness. Budding Eurotrash will be satisfied by their second album's shameless trawl through a kind of alternative '80s, with enthusiastic reconstructions of Chicago house ("Under Influence"), Kraftwerk ("Telephone Love") and electro ("Thrilla"). Cassius do, however, go too far, peppering the title track with the kind of honking saxophone and tediously elongated hair-metal guitar solos a director of soft porn would reject as too cheesy. All that's missing are the slatted blinds and Mickey Rourke.

RYAN ELIOT

CHEVELLE

WONDER WHAT'S NEXT ✪✪

SQUINT/EPIC

Named for Chevrolet's line of 1960s muscle cars, a Midwest metal act that spins its wheels

With their sensitive, heart-on-sleeve lyrics and occasional acoustic ditties, Illinois metallers Chevelle aspire to transcend the Ozz-infested strictures of down-tuned guitars and heavy-duty beats. Ambition aside, they slide back into the nü-metal mire throughout *Wonder*'s 11 tracks. Though Chevelle are often faithful to their heroes, Tool, Pete Loeffler's Maynard Keenan–esque singing on the lurching grind of "Comfortable Liar" and the spacey lead single, "The Red," turns to a style of screaming that's not believable or visceral. It's a decent homage, but lacking innovation, Chevelle don't yet have the right tools of their own to do the job.

RYAN RAYHILL →

Opposite page: Rob Hann/RetnaUK (Beenie Man)

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JULEE CRUISE

THE ART OF BEING A GIRL ✪✪✪

WATER MUSIC/UNIVERSAL

Gauzy tunes from *Twin Peaks* moaner

Since crooning the swooning "Mysteries of Love" in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* in 1985, and revising her ethereal approach for *Twin Peaks*, Julee Cruise has been the chanteuse who can bring you to your knees with a whisper. Throughout her third collection, her first since 1993, the vocals float like a ghost. Her disembodied delivery, coupled with delicate beats and icy bossa nova flourishes, results in abstract musical textures as spooky as they are seductive. The chilly outer-space samba of "You're Staring at Me" and the dreamy exotica of the title tune seem to melt in your head. And she hasn't forgotten her Lynchian roots: On the epic finale, "The Fire in Me," she reprises the *Twin Peaks* theme, "Falling." *Girl* is an enchanting spell that is utterly unbreakable.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

DEREK TRUCKS BAND

JOYFUL NOISE ✪✪

COLUMBIA

Chooglin' and noodlin' third album from 22-year-old guitar wizard. Lordy! Can he play

The phrase *raised on rock & roll* could have been coined for Derek Trucks. The nephew of Allman Brothers Band drummer Butch Trucks, he grew up on tour, jammed with the Allmans from age 12 and is now a part-time member of the band. *Joyful Noise* is the payback for all those days he skipped homework to play blues solos. But it's primarily a record for the men — and it's always men — who spend hours poring over guitar manuals. "Maki Madni," with vocals from Pakistani sufi singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, proves that Trucks's worldview stretches beyond the rural South, and soul legend Solomon Burke's vocals warm "Home in Your Heart" and "Like Anyone Else." Otherwise, Trucks's "Look, Ma! No hands" showmanship will have you begging him to stop the car and pull over long before the end.

CARLO TWIST

Ani DiFranco, as her publicist reads *Blender*'s review aloud

Division of Laura Lee demonstrate their solidarity by having identical haircuts. Bad ones.

ANI DiFRANCO

SO MUCH SHOUTING, SO MUCH LAUGHTER ✪✪

RIGHTEOUS BABE

Two-disc live album lays bare the singer-songwriter's every last annoying idiosyncrasy

In the five years since Ani DiFranco's last double live album, she's gone through a lot of changes. For one thing, her backing band's become a rambling jam unit, complete with horn section, keyboards and jazz excursions; for another, her irritating vocal tics (gasping after every other word) have permanently locked into place. DiFranco's still a distinctive, twitchy-fingered guitarist, but she's turned into the Michael Moore of rock: a smart but self-righteous iconoclast whose us-against-the-Man politics have become a vehicle for her to play the heroine. And the lengthy post–September 11 poem she premieres here, "Self Evident," is preaching to the choir — it's more about applause lines than genuine sentiment.

DOUGLAS WOLK

THE DISCO BISCUITS

SEÑOR BOOMBOX ✪✪✪✪

MEGAFORCE

Epic improv dance-rock: definitely not limp Biscuits

No other band does fist-pumping, high-NRG grooves better than the Disco Biscuits. On their third studio album, the Biscuits distill their live attack to come off like an urgent street-corner collaboration between Pink Floyd and the Beastie Boys. Their melodies can skip lightly or tumble like boulders, but their long, slow build-ups pay off with celebratory rock-rave orgasms. "Hope" and "Triumph" transform anxiety into rhythmic release, while the beat-based "Floodlights" revels in paranoia. While you can hear the improv-prog influence of Phish in "The Tunnel," and that of moe. in "Floes," the four-piece Biscuits have a flavor all their own, one that stomps all jam-band comparisons into the pill-strewn dance floor.

RICHARD GEHR

DIVISION OF LAURA LEE

BLACK CITY ✪✪✪✪

BURNING HEART/EPITAPH

Yet more snotty garage rock from the land of ABBA

It's difficult to believe that not so long ago, the idea of Swedish rock bands beguiling us with their snarling rock would have been laughable. And listening to Division of Laura Lee — who, like their countrymen the Hives, have more than a casual acquaintance with the Stooges — will make the task only harder. The quartet specializes in barely controlled chaos, flailing through 12 gloriously trashy tracks designed to make you sweat like a pig and shout like someone who . . . really likes shouting a lot. Equally adept at aggro ("We've Been Planning This for Years") and the creepy-crawlies ("Trapped In"), the band throbs with rock-star attitude. They spit angry, anthemic lyrics about life's inherent misery ("I'm not your sick sexual savior/I am your fucking bad behavior"), sneer and are considerate enough to never neglect a catchy melodic payoff. Even if those are the only manners they seem to mind.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

KURT ANGLE
WWE superstar and Olympic gold medalist

LIMP BIZKIT CHOCOLATE STARFISH AND THE HOT DOG FLAVORED WATER
FLIP/INTERSCOPE

"It's controversial. And it's great, though not as good as their last one."

JOHN DOE

DIM STARS, BRIGHT SKY ✪✪✪

IMUSIC

L.A. punk pioneer mellows for fourth solo effort

Those who know John Doe as the maniacally crooning bassist from X may be surprised at how much he's mellowed with age. *Dim Stars, Bright Sky*, his fourth solo album, is so low-key that even the amplified instruments sound semiacoustic. And while longtime vocal foil (and ex-spouse) Exene Cervenka is gone, Doe's fondness for female harmony remains: Aimee Mann's guest vocal on the slowly aching "This Far" is a highlight. Doe's quiet desperation sometimes gets the better of him, reducing his deftly observed compositions to the sort of whine that made Jackson Browne a fortune, but when everything clicks — as on the mournful, magnificent "Backroom" — his star still shines brilliantly.

J.D. CONSIDINE

GORDON GANO

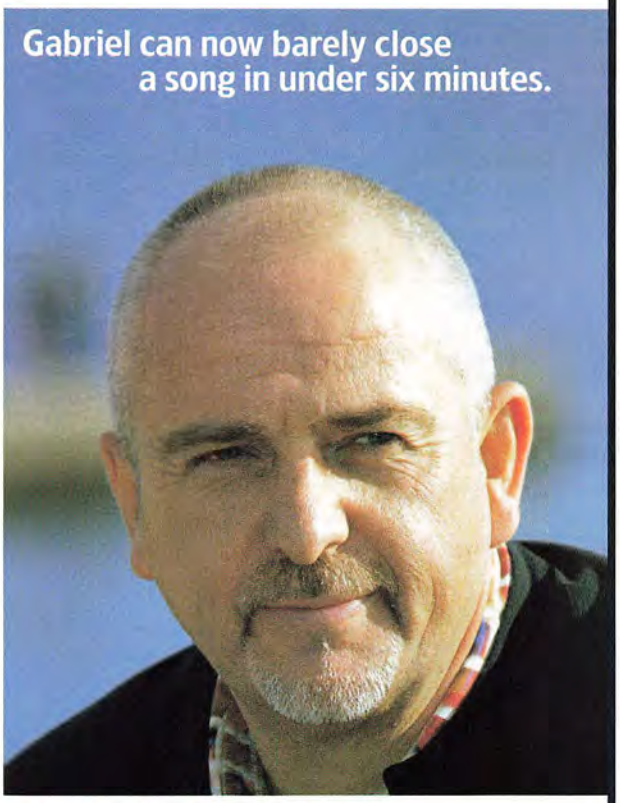
HITTING THE GROUND ✪✪

INSTINCT

First solo effort from Violent Femmes songsmith, featuring Lou Reed karaoke

Twenty years ago, on the Violent Femmes' debut, Gordon Gano — the son of a preacher man — barked hellfire sermons full of geek satire. Now, going solo, it's goodbye godliness, hello self-help philosophy. Does he mock the Me Me Me Generation? Hard to tell: His choked yelp and hootenanny backing suggest fun should be had. It isn't. Nor do his stellar alt-pals sponsor lots of laughs: Polly Jean Harvey (singing the title track), Lou Reed ("Catch 'Em in the Act") and Frank Black ("Run") provide little more than welcome respites from Gano's voice. Highlights? John Cale

This page: Jay Blakesberg/Retna (DiFranco); WWF/Zuma Press/Newscom (Angle) Opposite page: Tony Barson/Wireimage.com



Gabriel's Horn

This record took so long to make, it guest-stars a dead man

PETER GABRIEL

UP ✪✪✪

REAL WORLD/VIRGIN

WRITING MILLENNIUM Dome musicals, launching MP3 dot-coms and jamming with apes sure can mess with a man's schedule. Peter Gabriel, now 52, has done it all of late, while ducking a proper follow-up to 1992's platinum-selling *Us*. Nearly six years after it was promised, *Up* is finally here. As the voice of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan weaves through the symphonic world beat of "Signal to Noise," you think: Hang on, didn't this guy die in 1997?

Against the scattershot sonics of *Us* — bagpipes and Russian choirs battling on the same track — *Up* is relatively stark. The opener, "Darkness," offers the same claustrophobic clatter as Gabriel's 1980 breakthrough, *III*, while "Sky Blue," featuring the humming vocals of the Blind Boys of Alabama, is a sleeper in the mold of *So*'s "Mercy Street."

Lyrically, Gabriel has traded the romantic doom of *Us* for a more observational bent, which requires him to deliver the line "I squeeze the sponge and let the cat out" (on "My Head Sounds Like That") with pathos. Somehow, he makes it work. Once an awkwardly croaking Otis Redding fan, he's matured into a finely grazed white-soul voice.

Despite Gabriel's performances, there are no hits here. "The Barry Williams Show" may be a wry look at reality TV, but slo-mo rock-funk and a holler of "I love my daughter's rapist!" will not breach many drive-time playlists. And as suggested by *Up*'s 10-year gestation, Gabriel could use a tough editor. He can now barely close a song in under six minutes, and the riffs and rhythms reheated from past records reiterate his wandering focus. To hardcore fans — after such a lengthy wait, he has no other kind — the ponderousness can't be separated from the profundity. *Up* extends the unique career of an original art-rocker. Expect another record from Gabriel when he's 64. *MICHAEL LEONARD*

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- DOVES
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GEEZER BUTLER
BILL WARD

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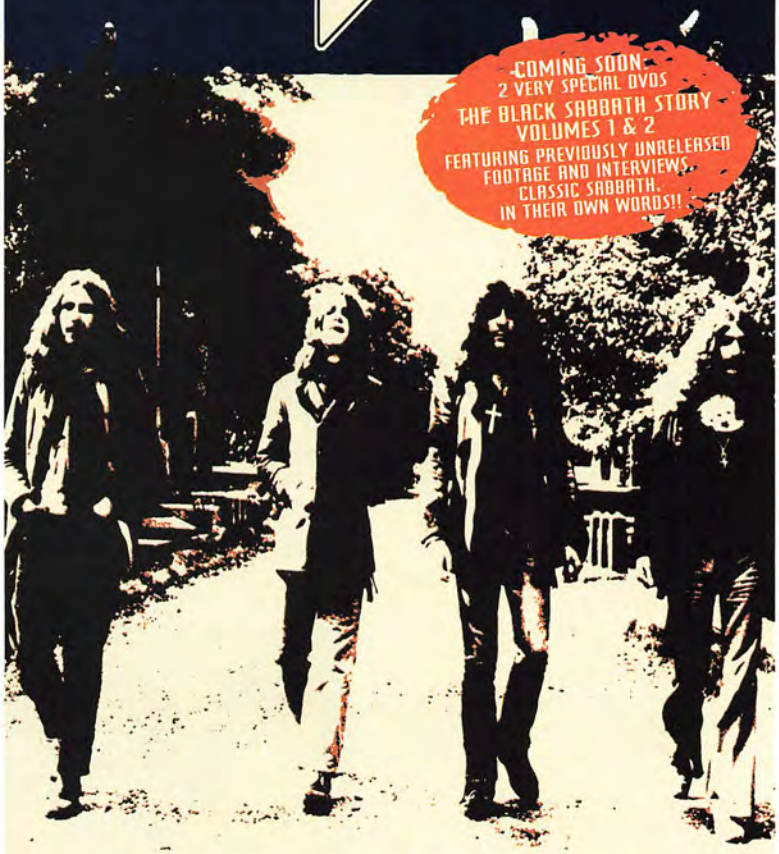

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("Don't Pretend") and 4 Non Blonde Linda Perry ("So It Goes") sing it straight, even solemn — welcome variation from too much twitchy business.
MAT SNOW

SUE GARNER

SHADYSIDE ✪✪✪

THRILL JOCKEY

Pioneering electro-folk chanteuse excels among the chill-out set

Although she's a folkie, Sue Garner finds her footing not in acoustic guitars, but in the starry tones of electronica. Compared to her peers (Beth Orton, Lamb's Louise Rhodes), Garner — an Atlanta art-school grad who played in the New York no-wave band Run On — is interested in disrupting listeners. On her third album, she enlists avant-garde heavies, including Jim O'Rourke of Sonic Youth and guitarist Marc Ribot, to make her most striking music: the fitful stop-starts and flamenco guitar of "Yes" create a strange samba-meets-glitch techno feel, while "Don't Still the Flicker" glows with twinkling piano and bassy clarinet. But the real star is Garner's voice, as husky and witchy as Stevie Nicks's in her heyday.
ETHAN BROWN

BOB GELDOF

SEX, AGE & DEATH ✪✪✪

KOCH PROGRESSIVE

Live Aid creator Sir Bob finds midlife doesn't have to be a drag

Bob Geldof is better known for his humanitarian work (Nobel Prize nominee, knighted Live Aid head) than for his few surviving Boomtown Rats hits, such as the killing-spree monologue "I Don't Like Mondays." His solo records have been shockingly uninteresting, but this one provokes an unseemly tabloid fascination: It's his first since wife Paula Yates left him for INXS's Michael Hutchence, both of whom later died ignominiously. For Geldof, 47, *Sex, Age & Death* is a midlife-crisis tale strong enough to reward repeated listens. Sir Bob quotes Bob Dylan on the bilious "One for Me" and does a dead-on Leonard Cohen for the elegantly wasted "Pale White Girls" and "10:15." The personal lyrics make these echoes of Geldof's heroes sound heartfelt rather than affected.
GREG KOT

GOGOL BORDELLO

MULTI KONTRA CULTI VS. IRONY ✪✪✪✪

RUBRIC

New York sextet punks up Eastern European folk music

Gogol Bordello bill their sound as "gypsy punk cabaret," but it could also go by a simpler name: punk rock. Made up mostly of Eastern European immigrants, Gogol offer folk instrumentation (horns, accordion and violin) and up-tempo klezmer beats augmented by rock riffs and manic, theatrical live shows. Eugene Hutz, who channels Iggy Pop onstage and spits English lyrics in a thick Ukrainian accent, rails against racism and irony, and introduces a bizarro multiculti wonderland called Hutzovina on "Occurrence on the Border." The album's centerpiece, "Baro Foro," is a nine-minute rave-up with a refrain as sincere as anything you'll hear all year.
CHRISTIAN HOARD

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

MEKHI PHIFER
ER doctor who stars with Eminem in 8 Mile

NAS STILLMATIC
COLUMBIA

"It's different than the normal rap album today — it's very educated. I feel like he was getting pretty deep with it."

HAND OF DOOM

HAND OF DOOM ✪

IDAHOMUSIC/RETROPHONIC

Alt-rock hottie ♥ Ozzy!

Having played bass for Hole and Smashing Pumpkins, Melissa Auf Der Mar now wants to "have some fun," which must be quite a change for her. In Hand of Doom, her Black Sabbath tribute band, Auf Der Mar is a fringe-bloused femme-Ozzy leading pals through (*live!!*) photocopied versions of "Paranoid," "War Pigs," "Fairies Wear Boots," et al. She howls with conviction, certainly, and occasionally suggests a metallic Patti Smith — as if we need such a thing. Queens of the Stone Age's Nick Oliveri turns up to shriek through "Mob Rules" (Auf Der Mar doesn't "do" the Ronnie James Dio era, apparently), but to no avail. After a baffling 44 minutes, the loudest clapping is surely from Ozzy's accountant.
MICHAEL LEONARD

HAVEN

BETWEEN THE SENSES ✪✪✪

RADIATE

Like U2? So do these British indie guitar-rockers

Formed on the rocky shores of Cornwall, England's southernmost peninsula, Haven migrated to grimy Manchester to make this debut with former Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr as producer. As a result, Nat Watson's melodic guitar, jangly in the manner of Marr's, sits high in the mix, on equal terms with Gary Briggs's angelic vocals. The overwrought Travis-like big ballad "Say Something" has already attained classic status in their home country, and it certainly sounds better than anything on Travis's last album. Unfortunately, although "Still Tonight" boasts an achingly gorgeous melody, and "Let It Live" cleverly contrasts Briggs's sensitivity with angry, howling guitars, most of the tracks don't quite rise above their obvious influences, Radiohead and U2. Haven display talent and technique in abundance, but to graduate to stadiums, they'll need to assert their own identity more firmly.
JOHNNY BLACK

Jennifer Love Hewitt knows exactly what you're thinking right now. For shame!

JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT

BARENAKED ✪✪

JIVE

Hollywood honey does a Britney in reverse, steps into pop world

Good looks aside, acting and singing demand almost opposite talents: actors get paid to be other people, singers to be exaggerated versions of themselves. For actress-cum-singer Jennifer Love Hewitt — despite her personable voice and cowriting credits — this is a problem. There's little in the bland, acoustic-driven title track or the sassy-by-numbers funk-pop of "Hey Everybody" to indicate an intrinsic personality unusual enough to demand your attention. Playing fairy godmother, Meredith Brooks (of the 1997 hit "Bitch") can't repeat Linda Perry's trick of refracting Pink's screw-loose temperament. Appropriately enough, easily the most engaging song, "Avenue of the Stars," concerns a wannabe actress arriving in Tinseltown.
STEVE LOWE

JAMES

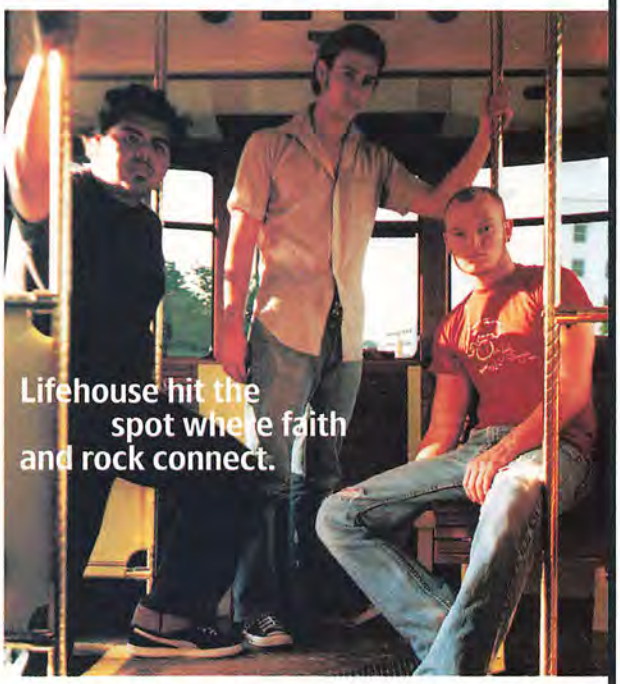
GETTING AWAY WITH IT: LIVE ✪✪

SANCTUARY

Veteran British indie band calls it a career with in-concert set. But will anyone care?

America ignored James, except when their sex-obsessed, Brian Eno–produced LP *Laid* briefly bothered the charts in 1993. In Britain, however, the band charted 20 jangly guitar-driven Top 40 singles and 12 albums over two decades, while singer Tim Booth's theatrics made him a beloved hero on the festival circuit. Recorded at the band's final performance, in Manchester in December 2001, this album hits the high points of James' career (1990's indie-rock unity anthem "Sit Down" and 1997's love-struck "She's a Star" represent their catchiest efforts), along with too many of the low (hear the mawkish "Vervaceous" and cringe). Ultimately, even Booth's uncanny vocal resemblance to Bono isn't enough to keep this overlong set interesting. A concise greatest-hits collection might have been a better way to leave the building.
APRIL LONG

Steve Granitz/Wireimage.com (Phifer)



Oh, Christ!

Covert religious rockers follow 2000's biggest radio hit with more faith-ful modern rock

LIFEHOUSE

STANLEY CLIMBFALL

✪✪✪

DREAMWORKS

FAITH AND MARRIAGE have a lot in common. The first connective rush thrills, but dry patches soon cause doubt and resentment, and then the rhythm keeps going up and down. Whether you're hitched to Jesus or the girl next door (or both, as with most devout Christians), you need to make an effort to keep romance alive.

Stanley Climbfall, the second album from the Christian-by-any-other-name Lifehouse, affectingly conveys the mood of young monogamy, both sacred and secular. The band's puppyish visionary, Jason Wade, is a newlywed in both senses. At 22, he's acquired both a wife and a de facto ministry, established when "Hanging by a Moment," from Lifehouse's 2000 debut, *No Name Face*, gave U2's "Elevation" a run for the year's best love song to a higher power. Many small-c Christian artists enter the charts these days, but few are as good at hitting the spot where faith and rock connect: the crossroads of rapture and doubt.

Wade's metaphors can be obvious — do we need another song about September 11, especially one called "Sky Is Falling"? — but the shiver in his voice and the poise in his writing add complexity, lifting Lifehouse ever so slightly above the quagmire of modern-rock inconsequence. "Anchor" and the first single, "Spin," jet along predestined for radio, telling an old story young lovers never tire of hearing, of passion's struggle against fear.

The band's seasoned coaches, producer Ron Aniello and engineer Brendan O'Brien (Pearl Jam, Limp Bizkit), make even predictable melodies sound fresh, and Wade writes some sticky tunes. He claims an English influence for this album, and though bassist Sergio Andrade sneaks in a Nirvana tribute on "Empty Spaces," dalliances with Travis and Coldplay show on "My Precious" and "The Beginning."

Wade's still figuring out how to sound like himself, and his songs don't always solidify. But he has a gift, and more importantly, he thinks about how to use it. For God and for pop fans, he's a good catch. *ANN POWERS*

JASON WADE'S CURRENT LISTENING

- RADIOHEAD — THE BENDS *CAPITOL*
- TIM BUCKLEY — MORNING GLORY — BOX SET *RHINO*

"These are not outtakes. They are, rather, stray tracks that I am very proud of and are either unreleased or underexposed."

– Steve Earle

Sidetracks,

featuring rare tracks from tribute albums and previously unreleased songs from such films as Dead Man Walking, The Horse Whisperer, Steal This Movie and the first single from The Rookie, "Some Dreams", plus covers of songs by Nirvana, Jimmy Cliff, and The Byrds.

"Beth Nielsen Chapman's music and songwriting have reached emotions within me that I never knewexisted. She is a true poet." – Faith Hill

"Always one of my favorite artists, Beth has created another work of incredible depth and beauty." – Bonnie Raitt

Deeper Still

featuring performances by Andy Bey, Emmylou Harris, John Hiatt, Vince Gill and Bonnie Raitt. Hear the celebrated songwriter of such hits as "This Kiss" on her Artemis debut, featuring the first single "World of Hurt".

"Life'll Kill Ya was about aging and decrepitude and stuff, so My Ride's Here...Well, as Anton (Fig) said in the studio, 'That's the nicest song about being dead I've ever played on!'"

– Warren Zevon

Ten new songs, including collaborations with Mitch Albom, Hunter S. Thompson, Paul Muldoon, and the first single, "Basket Case" written with Carl Hiaasen.

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J-ZONE

PIMPS DON'T PAY TAXES ✪✪✪✪

OLD MAID ENTERTAINMENT

Horny New York underground producer-rapper disses condoms, longs for fine automobile

CEO of his own label, freelance producer to artists like Cage and Biz Markie, J-Zone is one of the underground's brightest talents. But unlike the conscious, backpack-rap intellectuals who inhabit that realm, he has no interest in uplifting anything except his dick and his bank account: For him, the four elements are bitches, blue balls, Cadillacs and, well, blue ball–causing bitches. While his rhymes are sometimes only sharp enough to make such well-trod misogyny a guilty pleasure, his beats are unimpeachable: belching horns and woozy accordions coalesce into cartoony rhythms that sound like Tom Waits remixing a Bugs Bunny soundtrack. Rappers Al-Shid and Huggy guest on several tracks each, but they and J-Zone are upstaged by the production work.

GREG BEATO

SALIF KEITA

MOFFOU ✪✪✪

UNIVERSAL

Golden-voiced Afropop star shows off his soft side

Salif Keita has been called "the Golden Voice of Africa," and on *Moffou*, the first all-acoustic album in his more than 30-year career, he's given plenty of room to show off his pipes. Singing mostly in his native Malian dialect, he sounds alternately like a pensive rural folkie and Islamic prayer leader, his voice veering from understated ripple to full-on wail. With its gently strummed guitars, strings and light percussion, *Moffou* swings too close to adult-contempo Afropop — it's easy to imagine Sting caterwauling over some of these grooves. But on standouts "Yamore" and the nine-minute closer, "Here," *Moffou*'s jams are as poignant as they are polite.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

LADYTRON

LIGHT AND MAGIC ✪✪✪✪

EMPEROR NORTON

Sexless, emotionless and synthetic . . . hey, it's a robot party!

Every 20 years or so, a generation gets sick of hairy-palmed, nut-scratching Real Man's Music and decides to make its polar opposite. Effete, detached and doing their best not to sound human at all, electroclash outfit Ladytron (named after a Roxy Music song) are as opposed to Fred Durst and his works as punks were to the Eagles. A two-boy, two-girl outfit from Liverpool, Ladytron inhabit a world of raw analog synths, teenage lust and the Antarctic vibe of New Order's "Blue Monday." The vocal stance might be "seen-it-all supermodel," but Ladytron's doom-laden arrangements feel as accomplished as Radiohead jamming with the Pet Shop Boys. After a decade of feel-good boneheads, nihilism never sounded so positive.

STUART MUIRHEAD

Loudermilk: looking everywhere for some Charmin

L.A. GUNS

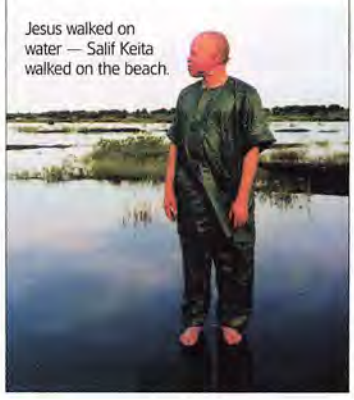
WAKING THE DEAD ✪

SPITFIRE

Hoary Angeleno hair-metal veterans say "grrr!" to terrorists

With hair-metal nostalgia spraying Aqua Net fumes across the land via a Poison/Cinderella tour, it seems a fine time for the return of L.A. Guns, the Hollywood rock crew formed by ex–GN'R guitarist Tracii Guns. Their *Cocked & Loaded* yielded a 1989 hit, "The Ballad of Jayne," but at that time the appetite for L.A. pop-metal was so high, even Faster Pussycat cracked the Top 40. Starting with its cover "art" — a cartoon devil and his hordes terrorize a fainting, semi-naked woman with Twin Towers breasts — *Waking the Dead* is just more formulaic Sunset Strip codpiece rock. These middle-aged men persevere with riff-gasmic guitar solos ("Psychopathic Eyes"), and title their obligatory awful ballad "The Ballad." When they present their social conscience on "OK, Let's Roll," which addresses September 11 terrorists as "red devils," it's clear they should stick to sex songs.

BEN MITCHELL



Jesus walked on water — Salif Keita walked on the beach.

LAYO & BUSHWACKA!

NIGHT WORKS ✪✪✪

XL/BEGGARS

London dance twosome take a stealthy approach, tip their hats to Devo

As the electronica elite tread water or sink from view, a power vacuum yawns. London duo Layo Paskin and Matthew "Bushwacka!" B are among those tipped to fill it — only it seems that no one notified them. Even subtler than *Low Life*, their 1999 debut, *Night Works* eschews the usual quota of big-name vocalists and floor-fillers, preferring to unfurl its charms slowly. Even the exquisite, Devo-cribbing club hit "Love Story," based on the synth riff to "Mongoloid," is tucked away toward the end. *Night Works*' web of crepuscular electro, sleepy-eyed jazz and occasional prog-rock guitars may demand close listening compared to the boisterous immediacy of most dance efforts, but it proves utterly entrancing.

DORIAN LYNSKEY

SONDRE LERCHE

FACES DOWN ✪✪✪

ASTRALWERKS

Mature pop debut from a 19-year-old Norwegian singer-songwriter

Can a man claim to have been influenced by '80s one-hit wonders a-ha and still retain his dignity? Sondre Lerche does, with a collection of deeply melodic, easygoing songs that, despite his avowal, draw more from Burt Bacharach and Travis. Singing in English in a light, intense, Alice Cooper–ish voice, Lerche constructs thoughtful romantic scenarios around sweetly old-fashioned soft-rock instrumentation. Britpop guitar strumming, frolicsome drum marches (on the light-footed girl-boy duet "Modern Nature"), boldly Beatlesque horn flourishes ("You Know So Well"), subzero-cool *boom-chick* rhythms and the lush, lilting strings of '60s pop ("Dead Passengers," "Virtue and Wine"): In the details, Lerche refers to all the music that came before him in order to sound like no one else.

ARION BERGER

LOUDERMILK

THE RED RECORD ✪✪✪

DREAMWORKS

From Nirvana's home state, a pastiche of hard rock circa 1993

Judging by Loudermilk's familiar riffs, these twentysomethings grew up on the heavy music of Guns N' Roses and Smashing Pumpkins. The awkwardly titled "Elekt," for instance, growls like a slow grind through GN'R's "It's So Easy," while the mock epic "Anthema" finds frontman Davey Ingersoll channeling head Pumpkin Billy Corgan's adenoidal tenor. Yet Loudermilk's habit of wearing their influences on their sleeves never undermines the mass-market appeal of the eastern Washington quartet's major-label debut. In fact, the album's best songs are so robustly tuneful that they even overcome titles as pretentious as "Estrogen Oxygen Aches in the Teeth Again." And that takes some doing.

J.D. CONSIDINE

LOW

TRUST ✪✪✪✪

KRANKY

Sixth album from the world's only two-thirds-Mormon hushed-rock trio. *Shh!*

In the clearest indication yet that they're attempting to buck their slo-core repu-

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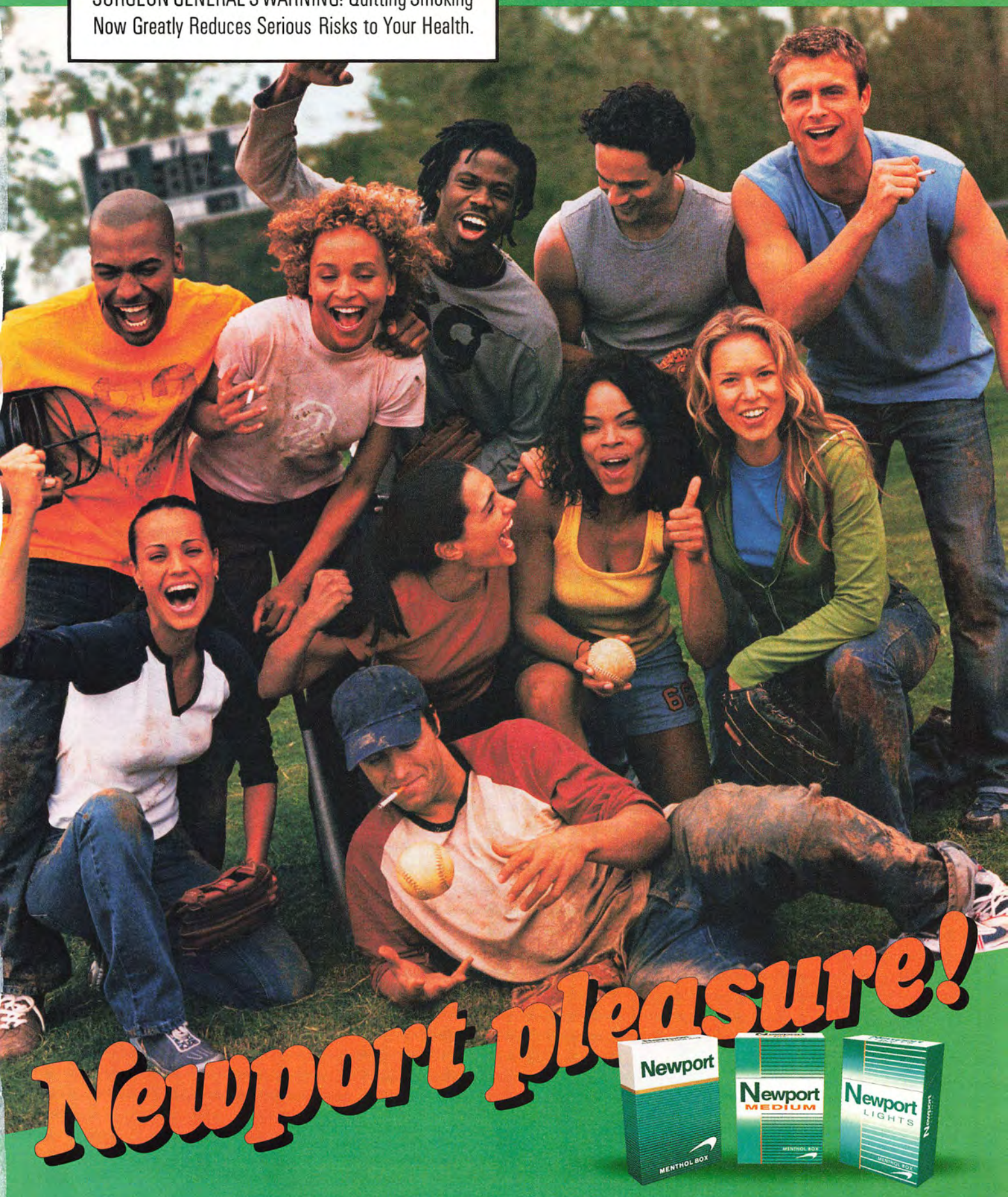


Newport pleasure!

© Lorillard 2002

tation, Low are getting louder by degrees. But whether they're wiring in fuzz pedals for the Velvet Underground stomp of "Canada" or backdropping "I Am the Lamb" with the sound of a death-row march, they still emphasize meditative atmosphere and near-whispered melody. Producer Tchad Blake (Elvis Costello, Lisa Germano) lends his echoing treatments to the mixes, but the focus remains the moody harmonies of Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker. Parker steps into the solo spotlight for the stirring "Tonight," while the couple's voices melt together to beautiful effect on the hymnal "In the Drugs" and the brooding stillness of the closing "Shots and Ladders."

TOM DOYLE

MANÁ

REVOLUCION DE AMOR ✪✪

WARNER BROS.

From south of the border, mediocre mariachis in debt to Santana

It's no coincidence that Maná worked with Carlos Santana on his massive 1999 album, *Supernatural* — when the Guadalajara, Mexico–based quartet gets cooking, it sounds a good deal like Carlos and company. Here, Santana returns the favor, lending his signature guitar lines to "Justicia, Tierra y Libertad," which begins with a slinky groove, then turns into a Latin-tinged rave-up more interesting than anything else on the record. On most cuts, Maná sound too much like any number of American roots-rock bands: Their no-frills (and not terribly Latin) guitar music is light on hooks and heavy on indistinct singing and bland lyrics about love and social injustice. You've heard it all before, just maybe not in Spanish.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

DOUG MARTSCH

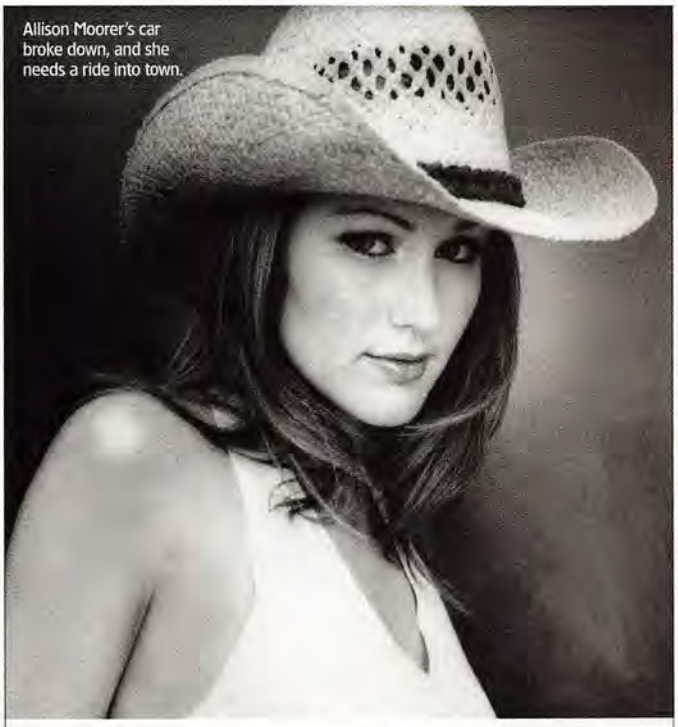
NOW YOU KNOW ✪✪✪

WARNER BROS.

Built to Spill stalwart goes solo, acoustic and stressed out

He's been alt-rock's last champion of the slide guitar for 10 years, but it's still odd to hear Doug Martsch, leader of Built to Spill, turning his strained tenor and ax heroism to old-timey acoustic music. The first few songs on his solo debut are folk-blues inflected, masterfully played and alarmingly similar. Fortunately, the rest of the disc is varied enough to make them sound like an intentional suite: a handful of affectionate Neil Young pastiches, a rocked-up hymn and some tipsily swaying ballads. Still, it's a sign of Martsch's real strengths that the best songs here are the ones like "Impossible," on which he erupts into raspy electric solos.

DOUGLAS WOLK



Allison Moorer's car broke down, and she needs a ride into town.

AUDRA McDONALD

HAPPY SONGS ✪✪✪✪

NONESUCH

Vintage Broadway without the usual camp or crassness

Routinely compared to such four-encore Lifetime Achievement Award powerhouses as Barbra Streisand, Judy Garland and Ethel Merman, Audra McDonald uses classical technique to rein in her exuberance. A three-time Tony Award winner, she's the Broadway diva of choice for people who hate *Cats*, and on *Happy Songs* she reaches back to the Depression, when America demanded that songwriters lift spirits. She's ostensibly celebrating her daughter's birth, but there's certainly some post–September 11 context to Harold Arlen and Ira Gershwin's "Lose That Long Face," despite her tasteful reluctance to wave flags. McDonald turns old show tunes into art songs and jazz classics into opera, merging and mutating tradition with a depth of feeling that's straight out of pop.

BARRY WALTERS

Doug Martsch: Four out of five men in knit caps need Rogaine.

MESHUGGAH

NOTHING ✪✪✪✪

NUCLEAR BLAST

More high-IQ death metal from Tool-endorsed Swedes

When Jack Osbourne decided to take revenge on his troublesome neighbors on *The Osbournes* by deafening them, the obnoxious blare he chose for the job was Meshuggah's 1995 metal landmark "Destroy, Erase, Improve." Even before that TV moment, this highly technical death-metal outfit was a touchstone for System of a Down and, especially, Tool, who invited the Swedish quartet on a short arena tour last year. On their fourth album, Meshuggah pull back from the complex time signatures of their last CD, 1998's *Chaosphere*, paring the arrangements down to a more brutal assault. Jens Kidman's snarling vocals are bolstered by the guitar pairing of Fredrik Thordendal and Mårten Hagström (names more suited to tennis players) on such overdriven slabs as the excellent "Perpetual Black Second." In a genre awash with riff-and-howl clones, this really is peerless stuff.

BEN MITCHELL

ALLISON MOORER

MISS FORTUNE ✪✪✪

UNIVERSAL SOUTH

Lavish production showcases a luminous torch-pop-country star

In the wake of Norah Jones's success, it may be longtime sophisticated country songbird Allison Moorer's turn at bat. On her surprisingly diverse third album, the Alabama native (and sister of Shelby Lynne) intones sad, sturdy songs with a certain distanced poise. *Miss Fortune* finds Moorer moving from the soft-focus twang of her 1998 debut, *Alabama Song*, into more ambitious territory. Memphis R&B stomps coexist with bluesy Ray Charles hymns, and reflective acoustic-guitar chorales (the gorgeous "Let Go") sit next to resolute I-will-survive pop ballads. Though Moorer's lyrics sometimes slide from smart to schmaltzy, her superb singing ensures that every tune on *Miss Fortune* is incandescent.

TOM MOON

MOTION MAN

CLEARING THE FIELD ✪✪✪

THRESHOLD RECORDINGS

Solo debut from underground spark offers a bizarre slant on hip-hop

Sure, Motion Man is gangsta and a baller — but he also fancies himself a fully poseable action figure. "Make Motion do things: Mack a bitch up! Act a fool in the club!" he crazy-eddies on the mock advertisement "Action Figure Intro." Fresh from an unlikely guest spot on Linkin Park's *Reanimation* CD, the Bay Area MC takes a satiric, sideways view of violence, showboating and other routine hip-hop themes. His admiration for Kool Keith, rap's weirdest nonconformist, is evident in Motion's eccentric topics (inexplicable references to Spider-Man abound) and offbeat delivery, but when Keith guests with a brilliantly oblique verse, it's clear Motion is a student, not a master, of the non sequitur. Still, his deftly woven flow is more advanced than Kutmasta Kurt's beats — horn-flourishing, piano-looping struts, serviceable but so traditionalist they border on the generic.

JONAH WEINER

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

DANNI ASHE

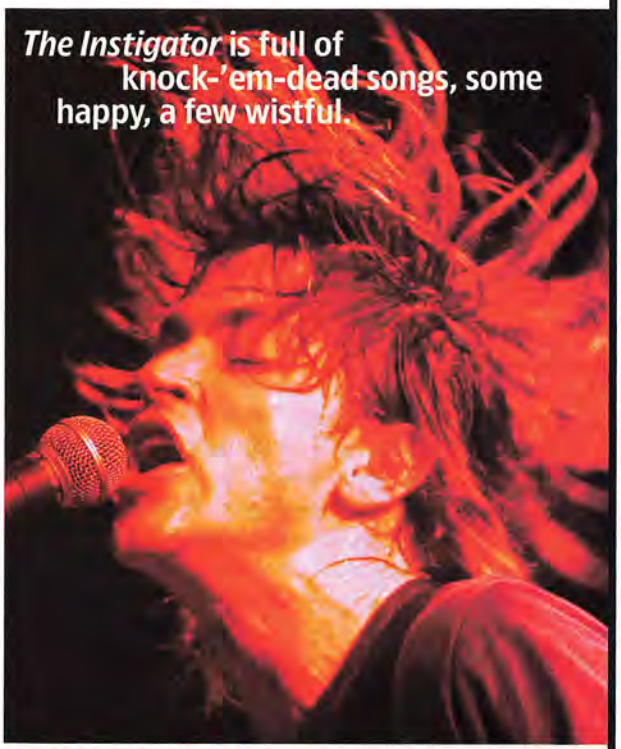
Porn entrepreneur, "the most downloaded woman on the Internet"

CAFÉ DEL MAR ARIA

CAFÉ DEL MAR

"I love it because it's mysterious, sexy and powerful. It puts me in the mood for love!"

This page: Anthony Saint James/Retna Ltd. (Martsch); Dannieshe.com (Ashe). Opposite page: Lawrence K. Ho/LA Times/Retna Ltd.



Miller Tales

Old 97's singer celebrates those almost-happy moments

RHETT MILLER

THE INSTIGATOR ✪✪✪✪

ELEKTRA

OVER FIVE ALBUMS with the Old 97's, singer-guitarist Rhett Miller progressed from earnest alt-country twang-and-bang to a more expansive but equally earnest power pop, culminating with 2001's *Satellite Rides*. Miller's dour lyrics could have made even Ryan Adams sound giddy, but the band's scrappy guitars and hurtling momentum usually kept the tunes from sliding into bathos.

With his solo debut, *The Instigator*, recorded while the Old 97's take a brief hiatus, Miller ups the melodic ante, staking his claim to becoming his generation's answer to Nick Lowe or Marshall Crenshaw. Like those avatars of roots-rock pop, Miller suggests that a good tune can overcome any ailment: "You gotta give the world the finger, you gotta sing a happy song."

The Instigator is full of knock-'em-dead songs — some happy, some exuberant and a few wistful. One or two sound like Old 97's retreads, notably "The El," with its clickety-clack train rhythm and baritone guitar chords, and the woe-is-me "Come Around." But Miller takes more chances sonically here, thanks to producer Jon Brion (Fiona Apple, Elliott Smith).

"World Inside the World" begins as just another bummer of a folk song with strummed, somber guitar chords, but it turns spooky and wondrous thanks to Brion's merry-go-round-at-midnight atmospherics; he also orchestrates background voices to stunning effect on "Things That Disappear" and "Terrible Vision."

Then there's the pure pop for recovering misanthropes: "Our Love" could be straight out of Lowe's magnificent late-'70s Rockpile period. "Our love's all wrong, our love goes on and on," Miller yelps, exulting instead of moping. Deploying wordless harmonies and cascading guitars, "Four-Eyed Girl" is even better, telling the story of a rock & roller who falls in love with a science teacher. Knowing Miller, the bliss won't last, but *The Instigator* is so damned seductive it almost doesn't matter. *GREG KOT*

RHETT MILLER'S CURRENT LISTENING

- BEN KWELLER SHA SHA *ATO*
- ROBYN HITCHCOCK ROBYN SINGS *EDITIONS PAF*

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MR. LIF

I PHANTOM ✪✪✪✪

DEFINITIVE JUX

Long-anticipated first full-length record from Boston's virtuoso underground lyricist

A bundle of EPs behind him, Mr. Lif is no hip-hop greenhorn. He declares his mission clearly on "I Phantom": "Hip-hop is so wack/The beats are fighting back/And I was sent to attack." His rhymes float and jab, packed but not choked with ideas: "People killed/By manipulated free will/Conscience will be the crucifix/The chopping block for poppycock." Producer El-P, the ex–Company Flow beatsmith and a master of richly textured compositions — incorporating vintage synths, fragmented breakbeats and turntablism — takes a more minimalist approach here. On "Glimpse at the Struggle," a steady bass line underpins whooshing swells of noise that feel as though a jet is passing inches overhead. With innovative, funk-influenced beats and engaging rhymes, Lif brilliantly avoids the pitfalls of vacuous bling-drones and "real hip-hop" whiners alike.

JONAH WEINER

GRAHAM NASH

SONGS FOR SURVIVORS ✪✪

ARTEMIS

First solo album since 1986 from the "nice" member of CSNY

Poor Graham Nash's rock-star friends have a nasty habit of dying on him, and he's not going to take it anymore. You'd need a chef's knife to cut the survivor's sanctimony of "Lost Another One" and "The Chelsea Hotel," not to mention the liberal vagaries of the antiracist "Dirty Little Secret." L.A. sessioneers ably perform this lite country-rock, often punctuated by bland harmonica solos from Nash, but the songs themselves are as gloopy as unrefrigerated Jell-O. Most heinous of all is a trio of love songs — "I'll Be There for You," "Nothing in the World" and "Come With Me" — so insipid they make Nash's bucolic CSNY hit "Our House" sound like Nirvana.

RICHARD GEHR

NIGHTMARES ON WAX

MIND ELEVATION ✪✪

WARP

Blunted British beatsmiths take a wrong turn

The title of Nightmares on Wax's 1995 sophomore release, *Smokers Delight*, nicely summed up their modus operandi: tuneful, instrumental hip-hop for listeners who like to keep a bong next to the stereo. Their fourth album, however, proves the theory that inside every down-tempo peddler lurks a jazz-funk outfit desperate to get out. In trying to graduate to "proper" songwriting, N.O.W. become mired in hopeless rapping, ersatz soul and such bumper-sticker platitudes as "don't let it bring you down — hold on" ("Date With Destiny"), like Morcheeba at their worst. The instrumentals waft by pleasantly, but the fine line between the blunted and the bland has been crossed.

DORIAN LYNSKEY

OK Go, auditioning to be *Soul Train* dancers

NO. 2

WHAT DOES GOOD LUCK BRING? ✪✪

IN MUSIC WE TRUST

Second offering from Neil Gust, singer with Elliott Smith's old band Heatmiser

"Whenever a friend succeeds," says writer Gore Vidal, "a little something in me dies." Let's hope Neil Gust doesn't harbor such thoughts about his ex-bandmate Elliott Smith, because there's little here to suggest he'll get within a mile of an Oscar ceremony. "Stranger's March" has a nice acoustic swing that weirdly recalls Smith disciple Badly Drawn Boy, while "A Little Confusion" snarls like the early Beatles, even if the deadpan vocals are more Ringo than John. Profoundly unremarkable, this colorless indie rock will be hailed as genius by 100 people and happily ignored by the rest of us. At least Gust will never have to rent one of those expensive tuxes.

JOHN MULLEN

TED NUGENT

CRAVEMAN ✪✪

SPITFIRE

Bambi-killing Motor City Madman's first studio album since 1995

Though some may not care for his second career as a right-wing provocateur and hunting-rights advocate, Ted Nugent is a hell of a rock star. Subtlety is for lesser men — his twelfth solo album finds him emitting sexual obnoxiousness and unhinged guitar raunch ("Cum 'N Git Ya Sum-o-This" and "My Baby Likes My Butter on Her Gritz" are Nuge-by-numbers) much as he has done for 27 years. But there's one twist: "I am pussy-whipped, and I like it," he yowls in, um, "Pussywhipped." This constitutes the first time Nugent — Eminem and Kid Rock's loincloth-wearing forefather in Detroit braggadocio — has admitted to listening to someone else's opinion.

ROB KEMP

Ted Nugent, solving his mouse problem

OFF BY ONE

OFF BY ONE ✪✪

LMC

Uninspired punk rock from more Green Day–loving brats

Long on spirit but short on ideas, these four spiky-haired San Diego teens capably regurgitate their favorite punk-rock sounds from the '90s. Rarely deviating from the snot-nosed Green Day template, Off by One lean on a spazzy rhythm section and staccato riffs wrapped around revved-up pop melodies. (The swaggering "Change," which charges along with old-school defiance, is a notable exception.) Mostly, this is boilerplate: rage ("On My Way"), teen angst ("Punk Rock Girl," "High School"), even a hyperdriven, unironic cover of the Natalie Imbruglia hit "Torn." Generic McPunk for those too young to remember the Clash. Or the Offspring.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

OK GO

OK GO ✪✪✪✪

CAPITOL

Impeccable smart-guy power pop from Chicago

With a Brown University semiotics major, Damian Kulash, at the microphone, and the same manager as They Might Be Giants, OK Go could either be Weezeresque power-pop whiz kids or insufferable smart-asses. Fortunately, they're the former, cramming all the best bits from their favorite records (those of the Pixies, Beach Boys and Elvis Costello) into alternately snide and lustful three-minute packages. The colossal glam stomp of "Get Over It," which winks broadly at Joan Jett and Cheap Trick, might seem too studied if it weren't so damn catchy, while "Hello, My Treacherous Friends" and "Don't Ask Me" sound like exercises in how to cloak the most barbed lyrics in the brightest melodies. Great things surely await.

DORIAN LYNSKEY

JOAN OSBORNE

HOW SWEET IT IS ✪✪✪

WOMANLY HIPS/COMPENDIA MUSIC

Pop star turns down the lights with a set of soul covers

From wondering "what if God was one of us" on her 1995 career-making hit, Joan Osborne has moved on to real soul

This page, from top: Lego; Dennis Kleiman/Retna Ltd. Opposite page, from top: Jean-Paul Aussenard/Wireimage.com; Steven Tackoff/Wireimage.com

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

MARSHALL FAULK
St. Louis Rams running back

BIG TYMERS HOOD RICH
CASH MONEY/UNIVERSAL

"They're from New Orleans — I had to get it. I can really get down to 'Still Fly.' "

music for *How Sweet It Is*, a smart set of R&B covers. Probing and introspective, her interpretations of the title track (a Marvin Gaye confection recast as if it were one of the brooding, troubled songs on *What's Going On*), Stevie Wonder's "Love's in Need of Love Today" and Otis Redding's "These Arms of Mine" are no less prayerful than the hit for which she is best known. The adventurousness of Osborne's most recent album, 2000's *Righteous Love*, which incorporated Pakistani vocal influences, confounded her pop fans. *How Sweet It Is* takes a similar left turn, but Osborne clearly believes that her love for this material gives her the right to make it her own — which she does, convincingly.

ANTHONY DeCURTIS

JUNE PANIC

BABY'S BREADTH ✪✪✪

SECRETLY CANADIAN

An eerie high-concept album about that scariest subject: parenthood

You can't say North Dakota auteur June Panic isn't ambitious. His fourteenth album is a five-part, 14-song meditation on infancy as metaphor, Christian devotion, death and circumcision (he's against it). It's all dissipated country shuffles played with slapdash musicianship and lo-fi production, and the rootsy backbone nearly obscures Panic's plaintive, nasal voice. His lyrics aren't as profound as he wants them to be, and the slender songwriting can't bear the weight of his ambition. Still, as the last note hangs in the air, the album's theme has become clear: As Bob Dylan once sang, he not busy being born is busy dying.

MICHAEL AZERRAD

JOHN PARISH

HOW ANIMALS MOVE ✪✪✪

THRILL JOCKEY

PJ Harvey guitarist gathers avant-rock heavies for second solo record

Polly Jean Harvey did some of her best singing on *Dance Hall at Louse Point* (1996), a collaboration with John Parish, her longtime guitarist, who brought out a vulnerability often missing from her music. Recorded over the past five years, *How Animals Move* is a primarily instrumental affair featuring Parish's spare, painterly guitar and an equally spartan approach to orchestrating ensemble performances. The title cut and "Florida Recount" are full of epic Sturm und Drang dynamics, while "Westward Airways" recalls the richly textured film-soundtrack work of Ennio Morricone. La Harvey herself provides a rich, beguiling vocal on the final track, "Airplane Blues," a warped 12-bar blues. But Parish is at his best on songs that, for all their avant-garde trappings, are eloquent enough not to need lyrics. Now, both of you: Another PJ Harvey record, please!

ROB KEMP

ALICE PEACOCK

ALICE PEACOCK ✪✪✪

COLUMBIA

Minnesota songwriter graduates from the open-mic circuit to Pop With a Purpose

Singer-songwriters are often too busy being pleased with themselves to actually write great songs. Alice Peacock is a product of this self-regarding milieu (she attended Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music), and her debut's sprightly folk-pop — think Sheryl Crow, but sadly, even less raunchy — bears that imprint too well. Peacock frequently mistakes self-help sentiment for powerful insight, and on "I'll Start With Me," settles for trite liberal commentary ("One in three can't read/So many mouths to feed"). But on "Bliss" and "I Hear You Say," down-home power pop triumphs over preciousness, and the choked piano ballad "Some Things Get Lost" is a lighter-waving highlight. If she lost that coffeehouse seriousness, she'd be more valuable by far.

STEVE LOWE

THE REINDEER SECTION

SON OF EVIL REINDEER ✪✪✪

PIAS

Members of Belle & Sebastian, Mogwai, the Vaselines and Teenage Fanclub: great music, awful name

There are certain words you wouldn't normally associate with Scottish indie pop — try *sobriety*, *ambition* and *supergroup*. But somehow this surly answer to the Traveling Wilburys has produced a radiant collection of pure pop songs, proving that Scottish bands have some innate psychic hotline to the American West Coast of the '60s. On their second record, the Reindeer Section have expanded to a number even bigger than P. Diddy's posse (28!), though the tone is not chaos but sweet languor. "Strike Me Down" sparkles like pre-LSD Byrds, while "I'll Be Here When You Wake" takes Bob Dylan's "Simple Twist of Fate" and adds splashes of lap-steel guitar and sighing strings. A private party, but a delight to eavesdrop on.

JOHN MULLEN

KIM RICHEY

RISE ✪✪✪✪

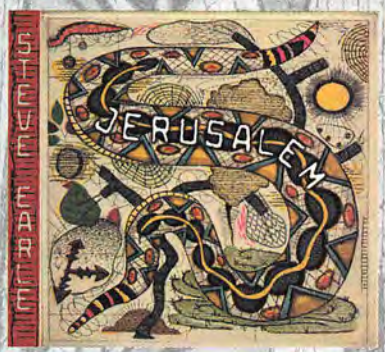
LOST HIGHWAY

Fourth album from under-appreciated Nashville exile is a haunting road album

On the first track on *Rise*, "Girl in a Car," Kim Richey hits the road with high hopes and enough cash for a few tanks of unleaded. On the second, "A Place Called Home," she looks back at what she left. The →

No peacocks were harmed in the making of Joan Osborne's shirt.

"This is a political record because there seems no other proper response to the place we're at now... In a big way this is the most pro-American record I've ever made. In fact, I feel URGENTLY American."
- Steve Earle



1. Ashes to Ashes
2. Amerika v. 6.0
3. (The Best We Can Do)
4. Conspiracy Theory
5. John Walker's Blues
6. The Kind
7. What's A Simple Man To Do?
8. The Truth
9. Go Amanda
10. I Remember You*
11. Shadowland
12. Jerusalem

*duet with Emmylou Harris

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other 11 cuts, all of which Richey wrote or cowrote, could be the songs she heard on the radio in between, full of haunting vocals and hazy, humid atmosphere. The sound is too richly detailed with modern production touches to be called country — two Sheryl Crow collaborators, Bill Bottrell and Brian MacLeod, are prominently featured — but the hard-living heartbreak Richey conveys on the elegiac "Fading" and the resigned "Good Day Here" couldn't be inspired by anything else.
ROBERT LEVINE

SAHARA HOTNIGHTS

JENNIE BOMB ✪✪✪

JETSET

Tough Swedish chicks want to rock your world. Let them!

Sahara Hotnights take a blowtorch to the image of the icy, submissive Swedish pop girl (think ABBA, Ace of Base, the Cardigans). A rock-hard quartet, they can go balls to the wall with any of the male-fronted bands currently sprouting from the crispbread capital of the world: Their U.S. debut (their second album overall) is the biggest blast of double X-chromosome punk snarl since Elastica's 1995 arrival. *Jennie Bomb* seethes with raw power, big hooks and beautifully dumb-and-defiant shout-it-out-loud lyrics. "Alright Alright" and "Fire Alarm" fuse old-school aggression to rough-hewn melodies, chunky, glam-slam power chords and fierce vocals from Maria Anderson, who channels British post-punk howlers and shreds incessantly over 12 tracks.
ERIK HIMMELSBACH

SEETHER

DISCLAIMER ✪✪

WIND-UP

Sure, these Ozzfesters sound like Nirvana. Right now, who doesn't?

While this South Africa–based trio does not have an abundance of original musical thoughts, no one has retooled the grunge-era quiet-verse/loud, tortured chorus dynamic quite as well. Well, no one except Creed, with whom Seether share a record company and soon, possibly, multiplatinum sales. You can easily imagine a sea of fans going nuts over singer Shaun Morgan's primeval, hook-heavy howling on "Gasoline" or "Pig," a song that allows a glimpse of his family background (like Creed's Scott Stapp, Morgan rebelled against his devout Christian upbringing). Relief finally comes at the end of this U.S. debut with the acoustic "Broken," a lovely, folkish lament hinting that Seether may yet step out of their predecessors' long creative shadows.
CLARK COLLIS

Bree Sharp, voted Miss Overbite 2002

BREE SHARP

MORE B.S. ✪✪

AHIMSA/UNION

A second lightweight effort — *B.S.*! Get it? — from a New York songstress

Twenty-six-year-old Bree Sharp first turned heads in 1999 with "David Duchovny," a lovelorn novelty ode to the ass-displaying Ivy League hunk from *The X-Files*. Sensibly, her second album is free of celebrity name-dropping — it's just a tasteful series of light guitar-pop tunes. Sharp's languid vocal delivery brings to mind an American sister to Dido on her gentle lullaby "Galaxy Song" and a more excitable Jewel on a rendition of Don Henley's "Boys of Summer." But her winning way with a melody isn't enough to sustain an album, and only "Sunday School & Cigarettes" and "The Ballad of Grim and Lily" are well-crafted enough to rise above the modest remainder.
ROB KEMP

"You've been a bad boy, Duncan Sheik. Go sit in the corner."

DUNCAN SHEIK

DAYLIGHT ✪✪✪✪

ATLANTIC

New York's think-y acoustic-guitar hero goes electric

Known for polished, intelligent folk — 1996's hit "Barely Breathing" and 2001's *Phantom Moon* — Sheik goes electric here with no loss of slickness or smarts. Coproduced by Patrick Leonard (Madonna, Elton John), *Daylight* builds a big rock sound, with orchestral swells and a resounding arena-size drumbeat surging through the singer's questioning, pained, intimate observations. Sheik's explorations of romantic disillusion burst from easygoing intros in a shower of metaphors — the centerfold in "Magazines" represents a disposal of the past. The joyous single "On a High" is a slice of pop delight about miserable self-knowledge. Sheik's sparklingly clear voice and subtly tricky guitar shifts transcend the pop-rock melodies — adult and contemporary in the best sense.
ARION BERGER

SHIVAREE

ROUGH DREAMS ✪✪✪

CAPITOL

If Björk were Californian, she'd sound like this, and have an even odder name

Ambrosia Parsley has a name straight out of a fairy tale and a voice made for a David Lynch movie. On the second album from this Reseda, California, trio, the music has no set pattern, incorporating jazz, country and trip-hop beats with echoes of Björk, Garbage, Tom Waits and Portishead. At the heart of it are Parsley's strange tales of broken love and death. "Bells are frying, eggs are ringing," she notes on "All Because You Told Me So." This album confirms the elegant, 30-year-old Parsley as one of alt-pop's original voices, by turns girlish and womanly, serene and cranky.
PAUL ELLIOTT

SING-SING

THE JOY OF SING-SING ✪✪✪

MANIFESTO

Former Lush guitarist makes luscious synth-pop, names her band for a jail

When Britain's early-'90s shoegazing scene faded out, so did its brightest stars. A few have reappeared in surprising guises — Ride's ex-guitarist thumps bass in Oasis, Slowdive swapped effects pedals for pedal steel in Mojave 3 . . . and here's one-fourth of Lush making euphoric pop electronica. Sing-Sing is a collaboration between Emma Anderson and warbler Lisa O'Neill (whose velvety voice has graced tracks by Locust and Kid Loco). Layering songs with samples, they give songs a jewel-like quality. "Feels Like Summer" shimmers like Saint Etienne covering Motown, "Tagen" sounds like Garbage in a rose garden and "Panda Eyes" pulses and pouts like prime Human League. The result is a vibrant, classy debut, which recalls Anderson's former band only in its ethereal grace.
APRIL LONG

SOFT CELL

CRUELTY WITHOUT BEAUTY ✪✪✪

COOKING VINYL

Sleazy synth-pop from the British duo that made "Tainted Love"

Since the English synth-pop sleaze queens Soft Cell split nearly two decades ago, Marc Almond has evolved into an alternative cabaret singer and author, while Dave Ball scored trend-savvy British dance hits as half of the Grid. Their reunion is low on nostalgia and high on middle-aged poignancy: *Cruelty Without Beauty* struggles with the issue of growing old in a throwaway culture, and the songwriting is suitably sharp, often fearful. "All my exotic gestures no longer in demand," Almond frets, while contemplating the contemporary banality of "Monoculture." Yet in updating the duo's dirty old sound, Ball makes the arrangements clunky, too clean and dangerously close to the blandness Almond bemoans.
BARRY WALTERS

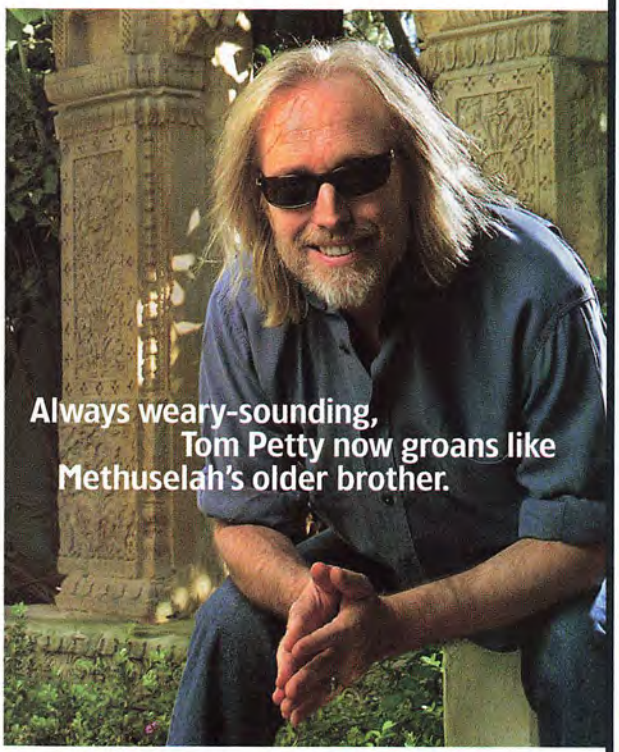
SQUAREPUSHER

DO YOU KNOW SQUAREPUSHER? ✪✪

WARP

A studio/live double from the world's most frustrating electronic genius

Tom Jenkinson has spent the last five years trying on new electronic styles like



Ken Hively/LA Times/Retna Ltd.

Petty Complaints

The former radio staple turns FM-unfriendly

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

THE LAST DJ ✪✪

WARNER BROS.

TOM PETTY'S *The Last DJ* finds him not so much biting the hand that feeds him as hacking off its fingers and turning them into some sort of grotesque necklace.

Three of the album's first four songs sneer at aspects of the music industry, from the title track's harangue against the national formatting of rock radio ("There goes your freedom of choice/There goes the last human voice/There goes the last DJ") to the depiction of a sleazy executive in "Joe" ("Bring me a girl/They're always the best/You put 'em on stage/And you have 'em undress").

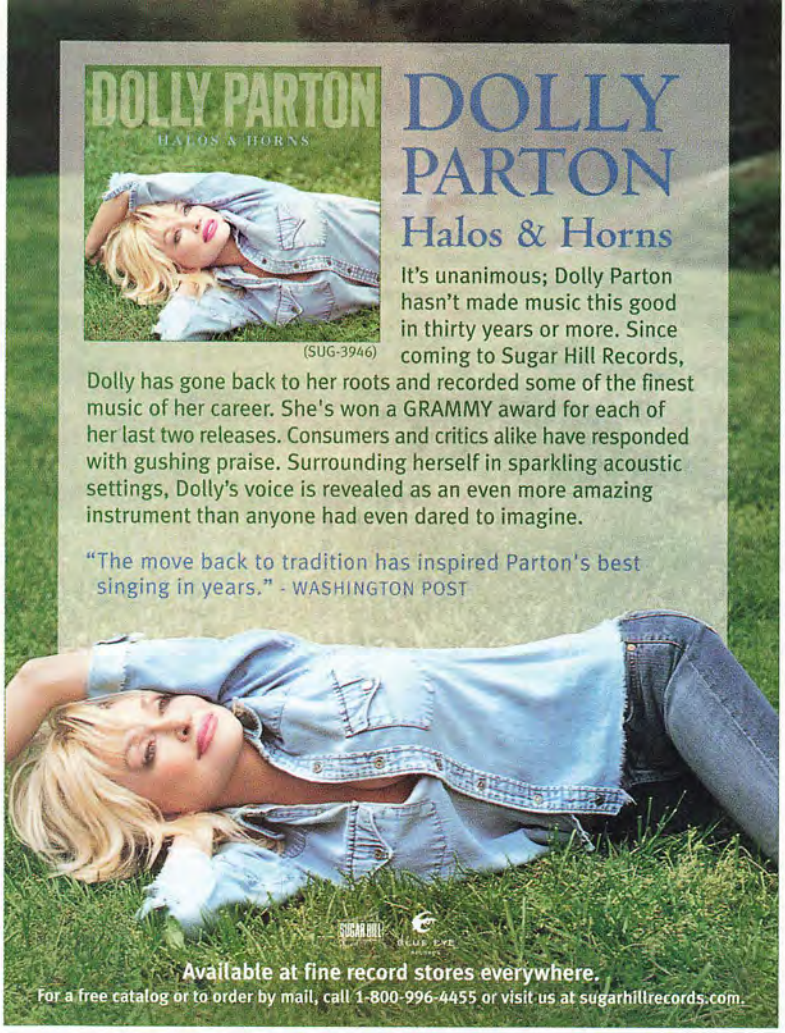
Of course, Petty has long criticized record companies for their greed and stupidity; one of his finest songs, "Into the Great Wide Open," used humor to mock the brief lifespan of most rock stars. For wit and memorableness, these songs are simply not in the same class. On "Like a Diamond" and the mawkish "Lost Children," the Heartbreakers — mistaken for a punk band back on their 1976 debut — lumber along at a funereal pace that leaves you praying for some of their trademark breezy rock-outs. And the always weary-sounding Petty, 51, now groans like Methuselah's older brother.

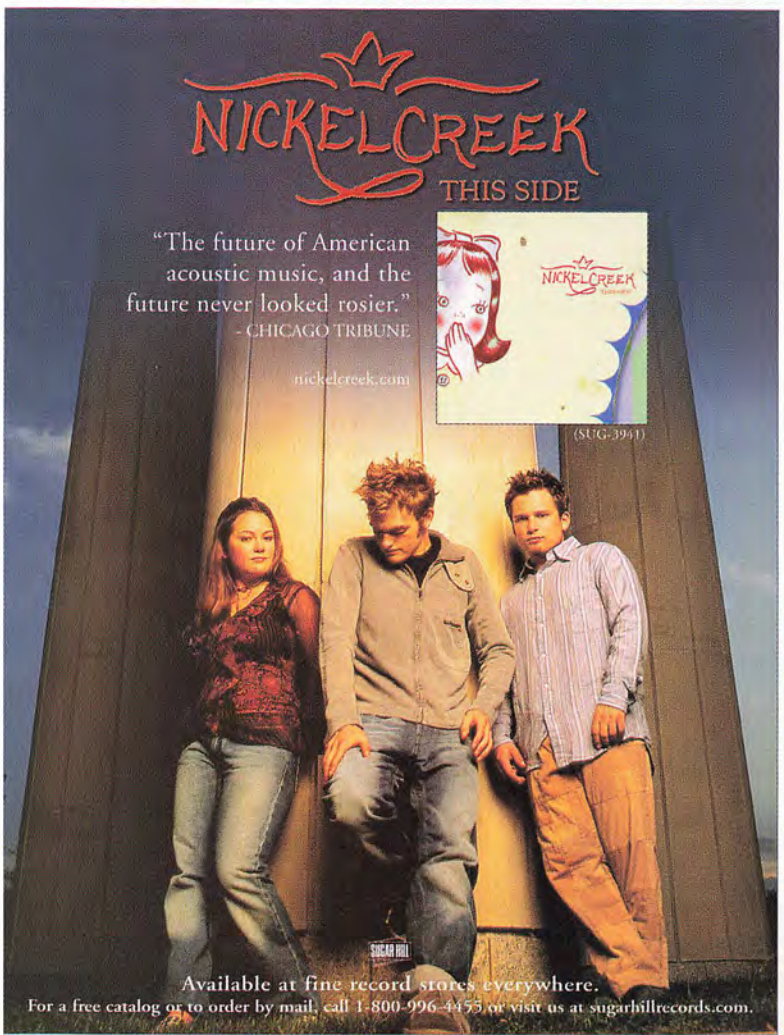
With the exceptions of the jaunty, piano-led "You and Me," that prayer is left largely unanswered — although Petty's mood and the quality of his writing improve on the Dylan-ish, riding-shotgun-with-a-babe "Blue Sunday" and the climactic, optimistic (if once again industry-baiting) "Can't Stop the Sun" ("Well, you may take my money/You may turn off my microphone/But you can't steal/What you can't feel").

Sadly, though, if Petty's fourteenth album fails to emulate the success of his best work, it won't be because corporations have conspired to turn off his mic, but because it's simply not as good. *CLARK COLLIS*

TOM PETTY'S CURRENT LISTENING

- JERRY LEE LEWIS LIVE AT THE STAR CLUB *BEAR FAMILY*
- JERRY LEE LEWIS LIVE AT THE PALOMINO *CHARLY*





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wigs, but the first disc of *Do You Know Squarepusher?* returns him to the glorious hyperspeed video-game music of his *Big Loada* (1997). This wouldn't be a Squarepusher record if it didn't flip the bird to listeners at some point: It ends with a 10-minute tug-of-war between organ atmospherics and splatter beats, then a too-faithful cover of Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart." The second disc, *Alive in Japan,* is singularly pointless: The 10 tracks, mostly from last year's *Go Plastic,* are barely distinguishable from their studio versions except for the crowd noise and booming room tone.

DOUGLAS WOLK

ANDY STOCHANSKY

FIVE STAR MOTEL ✪✪✪

PRIVATE MUSIC

On his third release, Ani DiFranco's former drummer locates his inner troubadour

If, by chance, Americans take to the wide-screen rock of the front rank of British bands like Travis, Starsailor and Coldplay, then Andy Stochansky will stand to benefit. The tastefully florid Toronto native drapes his wistful love reveries in a tenor that swoops and swerves around expansive melodies, occasionally vaulting into falsetto. Unlike Stochansky's first two more rhythm-oriented albums, *While You Slept* (1995) and *Radio Fusebox* (1999), the rippling guitars, stately tempos and shimmering, layered arrangements recall the aforementioned Brits, as well as Jeff Buckley. *Five Star Motel*'s tonal consistency is by turns entrancing and a bit too monochromatic, but for those who fancy a little subdued romantic grandeur, Stochansky's version is quite elegant.

MICHAEL AZERRAD

STONE SOUR

STONE SOUR ✪✪✪

ROADRUNNER

Slipknot dudes unmask, go grunge

While Slipknot drummer Joey Jordison acts out his scary-movie trash-rock fantasies with Murderdolls, singer Corey Taylor and guitarist James Root's side project, Stone Sour, is a more sober affair, its music heavily informed by the gloomy grunge of Alice in Chains. Glimpses of Slipknot's thrash-metal fury surface on "Choose," but surprisingly, "Bother" is a neogrunge anthem to rival Staind's "Outside." Most shocking of all is Taylor's Jim Morrison–inspired spoken-word piece, "Omega," in which he delivers a stinging critique of American life — work, politics, religion — and yells, "What the fuck is all this for?" Not even Slipknot, it seems, can fully exorcise this guy's rage.

PAUL ELLIOTT

Stroke 9 wish they'd splurged on a sectional couch.

STROKE 9

RIP IT OFF ✪✪✪

CHERRY ENTERTAINMENT/UNIVERSAL

Fourth album by dating disaster–obsessed Bay Area quartet

From the people who brought us the minor 2000 hit "Little Black Backpack" comes another set of enjoyably noisy guitars, crashing drums and driving, hook-laden rock songs. But beneath the sonic barrage, a smart and sensitive streak is maturing nicely. Guitarist-vocalist Luke Esterkyn peppers his endearingly honest, pose-free tales of wrecked relationships and wild partying with clever structures (the song-within-a-song of "Latest Disaster"), mocking sarcasm ("Danger is today's fashion, so sing another song about bashing someone's head in," from "Kick Some Ass") and unexpected payoffs ("One thing I forgot was to get to know you," from "Do It Again"). For rock that mixes partying with perception, it's hard to beat these Strokes.

IAN CRANNA

Slipknot's Corey Taylor removes his mask to reveal: He's Meatloaf!

SUPREME BEINGS OF LEISURE

DIVINE OPERATING SYSTEMS (D.O.S.) ✪✪

PALM PICTURES

L.A. chill-out troupe slims down to duo, does disco-influenced kitsch. World still turns

The loss of two founding members since their eponymous debut two years ago hasn't dimmed Supreme Beings of Leisure's enthusiasm. Here, the duo sounds resolutely upbeat, dabbling in a plethora of camp genres — disco on the opener, "Give Up," melodramatic easy-listening kitsch on "Catch Me," Chic funk on "Ghetto." But everything they try to revive has already been revived by someone else: Saint Etienne, Fatboy Slim, Portishead. Their retro stylings themselves sound dated, smacking not of the '60s and '70s but of the mid-'90s dance scene's obsession with the '60s and '70s. Vocalist Geri Soriano-Lightwood gamely injects some sassy attitude into the proceedings, but you've heard it all before — at least twice.

ALEXIS PETRIDIS

TEGAN AND SARA

IF IT WAS YOU ✪✪

VAPOR

Youthful Canadian folk-rockers cough up a generic little pill

Now that punk is comfortably commercial, folk has yet again been rediscovered as a vehicle for righteous indignation. Canadian twins Tegan and Sara Quin, 22, smother both ingredients with energetic but middling pop-rock on their second U.S. release. Curling their raspy →

Marc Steiel/Wirelmage.com (Stone Sour)

COOLIO

ElCoolMagnifico

"ONCE again,
Coolio shows the
Hip-Hop World
how to
"Shake It Up"
with his
new single.
He is truly
"El Cool Magnifico!"

– FLO ANTHONY
Black Elegance Magazine
Jones Radio Network

"Coolio was one of the first rappers to balance pop accessibility with gritty, street-level subject matter and language."

– STEVE HUEY
All Music Guide

"Coolio's back,
and sure to 'Shake It Up'
in the nightclubs
and at beach parties
with this hypnotic, upbeat
dance track."

– BILLY JOHNSON JR.
Urban Editor, LAUNCH,
Your Yahoo! Music Experience

...includes the hit 'SHAKE IT UP' and the Grammy contender 'SUNSHINE'

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voices around lyrics the way Ani DiFranco and Alanis Morissette do, the Quins' grrrl-power postures mostly cloy, while the lyrics read like a sensitive teenager's mawkish diary entries: "I would go to jail with only boys/Just to prove I was as tough as you." For better or worse, Tegan and Sara are the sound of Gen Y coming out of its teen-pop trance and into the first wide-eyed stirrings of adulthood.
MICHAEL AZERRAD

THIEVERY CORPORATION

THE RICHEST MAN IN BABYLON ✪✪

ESL MUSIC

Cosmopolitan dance duo is chilly — not chilled

Washington, D.C.'s Thievery Corporation have superb taste. A pair of producers, their interests include dub, Latin, soul and a variety of slow electronic styles, all elements their second album shuffles through at will. They're even commendably international in their choice of guest vocalists, calling on Iceland's sub-Björk Emiliana Torrini, early-'90s rap/reggae hybrid Shinehead and someone named LouLou, who sings "Omid (Hope)" entirely in Farsi. Taste, however, seems to be all they possess. While perfectly accomplished, this is big-budget background noise, purpose-built for any one of the plush cocktail bars it's soon to be endlessly played in, but lacking anything as distinct as, say, a personality of its own.
RYAN ELIOT

PAM TILLIS

IT'S ALL RELATIVE ✪✪

LUCKY DOG/EPIC

Sentiment wins out over soul in country's Tillis family affair

This '90s country star, whose career is on its downside after several substantial hits on Arista, shows more sentiment than sense on *It's All Relative* as she tries for a second wind by cutting a set of oldies written by her father. Mel Tillis was one of mainstream country's most consistent hitmakers from the mid-'60s through the early '80s, and thus is regarded as prehistoric in the ahistorical climate that currently prevails in Nashville. But Pam's fearlessness is undercut somewhat by her erratic attack. Despite vibrant readings of "Burning Memories" and "Goodbye Wheeling," and her withering take on "Unmitigated Gall," she meticulously oversings slowed-down arrangements of "Heart Over Mind" and "Detroit City," two of Mel's best. Ultimately, Pam's brand of country soul slips on her overwrought sentimentality.
JOHN MORTHLAND

Pam Tillis can't decide where to put her Gwar poster.

TIN HAT TRIO

THE RODEO ERODED ✪✪✪

ROPEADOPE

Avant-country trio from San Francisco pushes further into Peckinpah land

The producers of the PBS TV series *Frontier House* missed a trick by not using the music of Tin Hat Trio: Their combination of old-world Americana with the harsher elements of modernist composition would've complemented the families' descent into gun-toting insanity quite nicely. THT's third album is the genuine sound of alt-country — the stuttering, weirdly groovesome "Holiday Joel" sounds like the bastard child of Stravinsky and the Carter Family, while "The Last Cowboy" pushes bluegrass melancholy into a truly gothic realm of darkness. They restore a sense of weirdness to country, but there's something slightly chilling about their formalist approach to what should be very human music — Willie Nelson's tender, bruised singing on "Willow Weep for Me" is a blessed reprieve from all the earnest experimentation.
JOHN MULLEN

THE TRAGICALLY HIP

IN VIOLET LIGHT ✪✪✪

ROUNDER

Long-adored Canadian alt-blues quintet praises famous poets

Though they're regarded as gods in Canada for their earnest anthems and yearning, abstract lyrics, the Tragically Hip are mere mortals south of the border, where twangy guitar workouts earned them buzz on the jam-band circuit. For their ninth album, producer Hugh Padgham (the Police's *Synchronicity*) captures the musical telepathy that marks the Tragically Hip's live shows. Recorded in the Bahamas, *Violet* derives inspiration by adding a '60s free-love vibe to singer Gordon Downie's angular poetry. Guitarists Robby Bakker and Paul Langlois whip up a gale for "The Dire Wolf" and add folk bite to Downie's urbane sea shanty "A Beautiful Thing." "The Darkest One" packs stateside radio hooks, but as hockey references go, that "forget-your-skates dream" in the wistful "It's a Good Life if You Don't Weaken" is as Canadian as a Molson bender.
LAURA SINAGRA

VARIOUS ARTISTS

DRESSED IN BLACK: A TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY CASH ✪✪

DUALTONE

KINDRED SPIRITS: A TRIBUTE TO THE SONGS OF JOHNNY CASH ✪✪✪

SONY NASHVILLE

These two lackluster tributes would leave the Man in Black feeling blue

Like any real American icon, Johnny Cash contains multitudes: His songs about tough life and hard time defined country and shaped rock. But the torrent of reissues marking his seventieth birthday say more about his singular influence than about these tributes. On *Dressed in Black*, alt-country whippersnappers Robbie Fulks ("Cry, Cry, Cry") and Raul Malo ("I Guess Things Happen That Way") cover Cash classics, but they seem too awed to take chances with the sacred material. *Kindred Spirits* features older performers, including Dwight Yoakam and, in performances taken from a TNT television tribute, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. In spots, it's more revealing — especially Rosanne Cash's tender take on "I Still Miss Someone" and Little Richard's rave-up, "Get Rhythm." Still, most of the artists seem oddly tentative, as though Cash's legacy was as intimidating as the man himself.
ROBERT LEVINE

The Tragically Hip stand motionless; Canadian women swoon!

VARIOUS ARTISTS

FAT BEATS COMPILATION VOLUME 2 ✪✪✪

FAT BEATS

Longtime champions of underground rap compile the genre's greatest . . . and latest

On college campuses across the land, independent hip-hop purists stuff their Triple 5 Soul backpacks with music from the reliable New York label/distributor Fat Beats, whose artists reject flamboyance and experimentation for straightforward beats and rhymes. FB's second compilation assembles mid-'90s essentials (the Arsonists' frenetic "Session," East Flatbush Project's defiant "Tried by Six") and solid new offerings from rising stars (Cali wordsmith Wildchild, celebrated Minneapolis brats Atmosphere, J-Zone's low-budget boasts). It even branches into surprisingly unconventional territory: On "Come on Feet," Quasimoto raises his helium voice over somber, surreal atmospherics.
CHAIRMAN MAO

VARIOUS ARTISTS

MUSTIQUE BLUES FESTIVAL 2002 ✪✪✪

BCEF

Live blues jam for charity, recorded on an island *you* can't afford to visit

If you think a live blues album recorded at the exclusive millionaires' retreat that is the Caribbean island of Mustique will probably not displace the career highlights of, say, Muddy Waters in your affections, you're probably right. But this selection of highlights from last January's Mustique Blues Festival does boast its share of talent, particularly onetime Davie Bowie associate-turned-boogie-woogie chanteuse Dana Kennedy, who slinks through Lil

Johnson's "Meat Balls." Other featured artists include onetime Etta James collaborator Zach Prather and — it behooves us to mention — *Blender* overlord Felix Dennis, who offers both rhyming liner notes and vocals on "Who Do You Love." Further details can be found at basils-mustique.com.

CLARK COLLIS

VARIOUS ARTISTS

NONE BUT THE RIGHTEOUS ✪✪✪✪

ARHOOLIE/ROPEADOPE

Contemporary master practitioners of a sanctified guitar style strut their stuff

Traditionally, the lap steel guitar is considered a quintessential musical detail on country records. But a few years back, an alternate use for the keening instrument emerged — since the '30s, congregants at Pentecostal churches in Florida have used steel guitars in lieu of organs as the basis for a gospel music dubbed "sacred steel." Medeski Martin & Wood keyboardist John Medeski has compiled 17 tunes, some in creeping blues mode (Ted Beard's "Call Him by His Name"), others gospel rave-ups (the Campbell Brothers' "Jump for Joy"). But the signal technique of sacred steel slurs notes like those of bottleneck slide guitarists such as Duane Allman. By comparison, Nashville steel guitar sounds like a product of the conservatory. It's the sound of honky-tonk music purged of all its sin.

ROB KEMP

VARIOUS ARTISTS

PLASTIC VOLUME 6 ✪✪

NETTWERK

The electronic music of the future, 1997-style

Dance subgenre du jour electroclash has ensured that bad makeup, A Flock of Seagulls haircuts and pretending to be gay are all back. So where does that leave good old-fashioned banging electronica like Mom used to make? Looking pretty sick, apparently, as evidenced by the latest installment of this raver's-digest compilation series. The Chemical Brothers and German DJ Timo Maas demonstrate that they still have an idea or two rattling around their pointy heads, but the remainder is a parade of faux-classical string breaks, cheap spirituality and witless "*Whooo*-look-at-all-the-pretty-colors" vocals. You know you're in for a little bit of trouble when the most enjoyable track here marries an old Simple Minds tune to the vocal from Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody." *Mamma mia,* let me go.

STUART MUIRHEAD

PETER WOLF

SLEEPLESS ✪✪✪

ARTEMIS

Former J. Geils Band mouthpiece calls superstar rock pals. Mick and Keith pause from counting their $$

In the late-'70s heyday of the J. Geils Band, Peter Wolf brought art-school smarts to a mix of blues-boy yelps and the ranting, panting raps he developed during years as a Boston radio DJ. *Sleepless* takes another view of his Delta fever, with sweet, road-tripping slide guitar roughed up by A-listers Keith Richards and Steve Earle. Mick Jagger joins the festivities for a warm, country-fried cover of "Nothing but the Wheel," and "A Lot of Good Ones Gone" salutes the legacy of dead blues giants. Some flat tunes sound like a wedding band thudding out Motown, but the best ones, including the cello-sawing Southern gothic "Run Silent, Run Deep," say even more about hard living than Wolf did when he was roaring "Love Stinks."

LAURA SINAGRA

LEE ANN WOMACK

SOMETHING WORTH LEAVING BEHIND ✪✪✪

MCA NASHVILLE

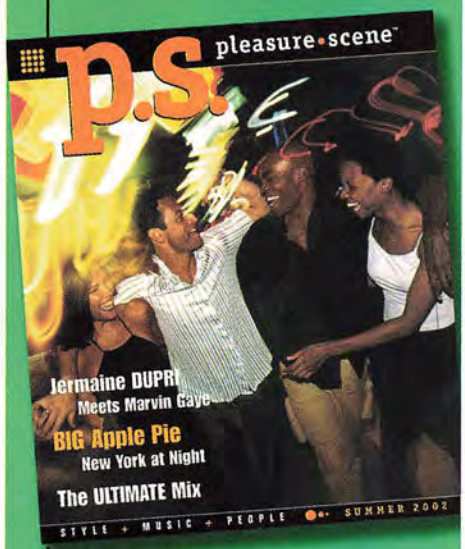
It's tricky following up a pop-country smash

Two years ago, Lee Ann Womack changed her career with one song: the title track to *I Hope You Dance* crossed over to pop radio, sold 3 million records and even spawned a book of the same name. The title song to her fourth album is similar enough to her breakthrough hit to suggest that she's mimicking herself, but that's not the case. Womack hardly plays it safe, choosing songs as sensual as "I Need You" ("I need something like morphine, only better") and "Talk to Me" ("As I sit here breathing/As I watch you undress"). A strong, elegant Texas singer mostly looking for substance and depth, Womack generally replaces her former country-band sound with a string section, subtly romantic but sharply edged in blue. But this piquant effect is sometimes spoiled by soulless, almost laughably clichéd "ax" noodling, a nod to rock she could have done without.

PHIL SUTCLIFFE

Lee Ann Womack hoped to win the Dress Like Britney's Mom contest.

style music people



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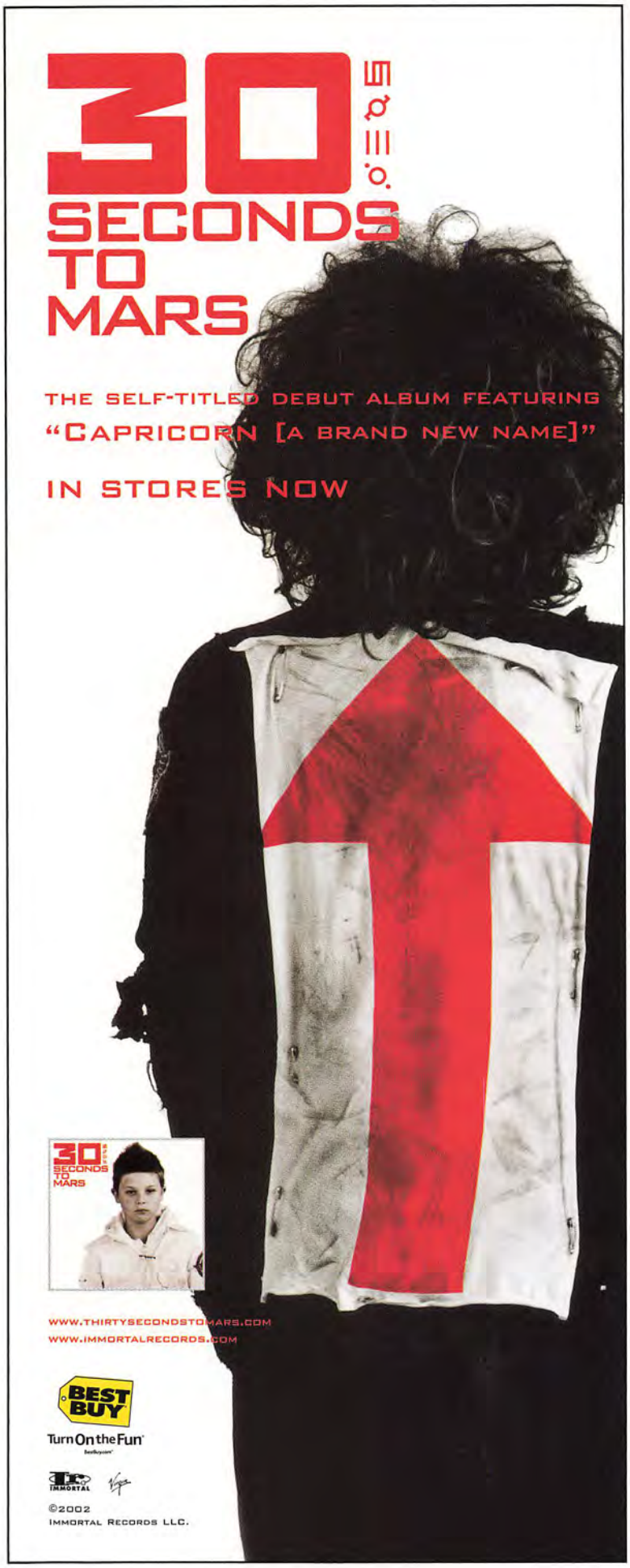


XZIBIT

MAN VS. MACHINE ✪✪✪

OPENBAR

Proficient rapper banks on famous friends, big beats. Note: his mama calls him "Alvin"

Before his last album, *Restless*, Xzibit was a talented though unknown thug boasting breakneck flow and powerhouse beats. On *Man vs. Machine*, he reprises the formula behind *Restless*, inviting Dr. Dre back to the party along with an array of producers and guest stars, including his Up in Smoke tourdoggs Snoop Dogg and Eminem. Despite the large cast, much of the material features clamorous, heavy-handed production, and though Xzibit's subject matter ranges from orgies to the benevolence of his mama, his dexterous rhyming style is a little too undifferentiated. Dig the highlights "Gambler" and "Say My Name," featuring Eminem; for everything else, just nod your head till your neck hurts.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

YOHIMBE BROTHERS

FRONT END LIFTER ✪✪✪

ROPEADOPE

They're not brothers, neither is named Yohimbe and the title is a grade-school sex joke

Yohimbe is an African root known as "natural Viagra," but the Yohimbe Brothers (Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid and turntablist DJ Logic) don't seem to have sex on the brain. Although some tracks — such as the rap-spiked "6996 (Club Yohimbe)" — sport randy wit, the bulk of the CD is devoted to engaging aural collages, with Reid's quicksilver guitar slithering through Logic's slice-and-dice soundscapes, as the beats morph from reggae to drum & bass to hillbilly hoedown. It ain't the new Living Colour album (that's next year), but *Front End Lifter* is trippy and hooky enough to be perfect headphones fare.

J.D. CONSIDINE

Blender Approved

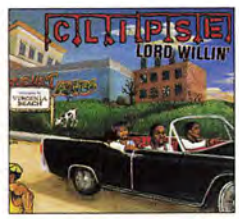
The pick of recent new releases

THE VINES

HIGHLY EVOLVED

CAPITOL

To these four youthful Aussies, "retro" means Seattle, 1993. "Get Free" reignites grunge with a two-minute breakup roar.



CLIPSE

LORD WILLIN'

STAR TRAK/ARISTA

"I deal coke," raps Malice, half of this Neptunes-produced duo. On their debut, Clipse bring good stuff, raw and uncut.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND THE E STREET BAND

THE RISING

COLUMBIA

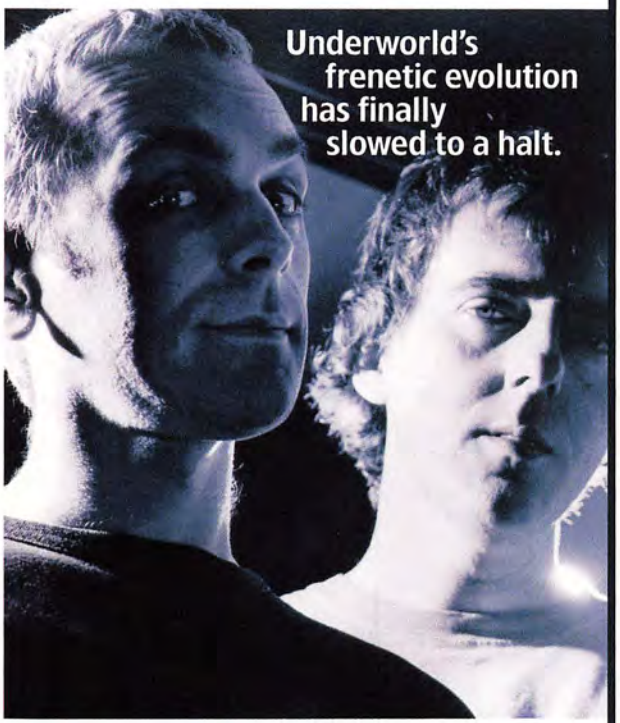
Big songs about death and mourning result in hope and uplift. Move over, Bono.

BETH ORTON

DAYBREAKER

ASTRALWERKS

On her sublime third album, British singer-songwriter Orton mixes skewed country with indie-dance influence, making her one chilled-out cowgirl.



David Torge/RetnaUK

Slippy Sloppy

Once techno kingpins, Underworld lose a member — and a sense of direction

UNDERWORLD

A HUNDRED DAYS OFF

✪✪✪

V2

AS FRED DURST may discover once he finds someone to fill Wes Borland's colorful shoes, the departure of a key member can unsettle a band's future. In 1992, the arrival of whiz-kid DJ Darren Emerson, a decade younger than bandmates Karl Hyde and Rick Smith, coincided with Underworld's transformation from struggling synth-rockers into one of techno's most compelling outfits — and one of its biggest, thanks to the 1996 crossover hit "Born Slippy."

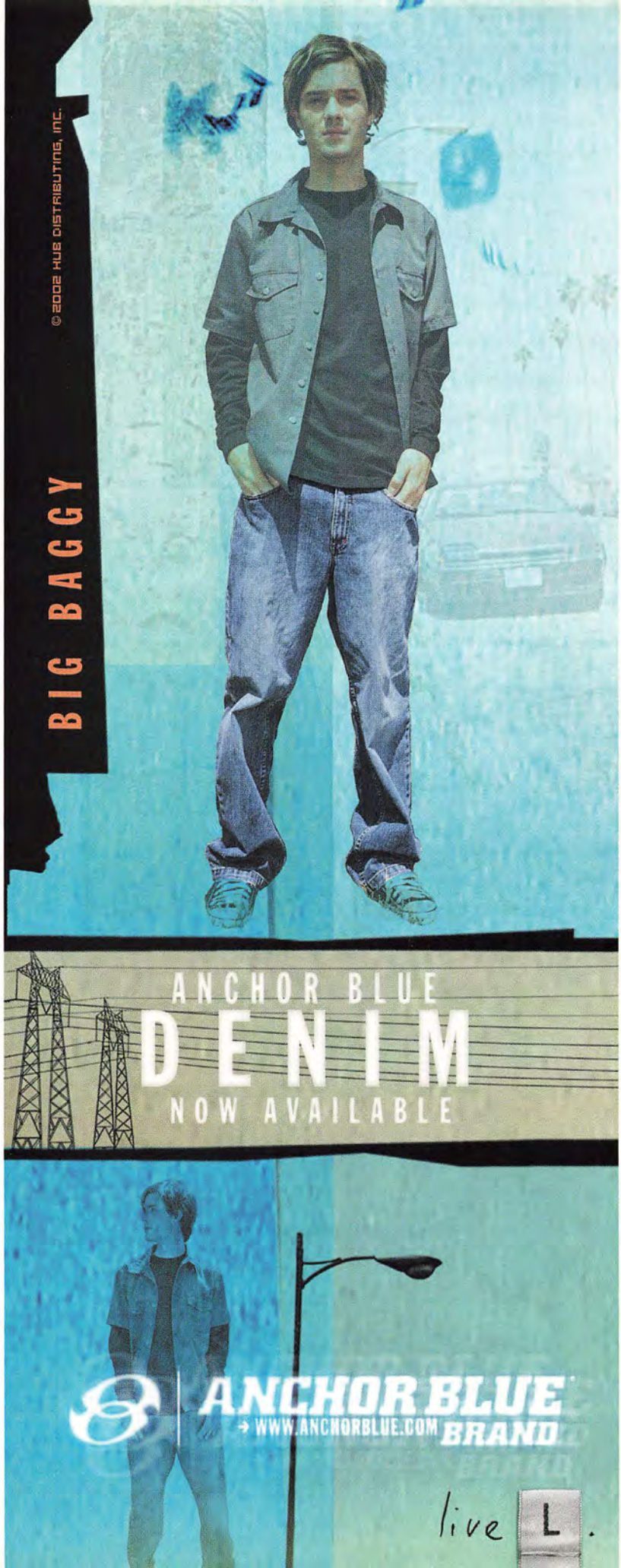
It's notoriously difficult to discern dance producers' division of responsibilities — so Emerson's exit two years ago could have proven either devastating or barely noticeable. The good news is that practically nothing has changed. That's also the bad news.

While 2000's *Everything, Everything* live set closed one chapter in Underworld's career, their sixth proper album doesn't quite open a new one. In the past, Underworld have responded to dance-floor trends such as big beat and drum & bass, but here they rarely deviate from the shuddering, locomotive bass lines and vast synth chords that have always filled their music. Although it's the album's euphoric highlight, "Two Months Off" could almost have appeared on their first album, and "Twist" even employs the sparse, padding bass of Chicago house pioneer Mr. Fingers, circa 1986.

The weakest link is Hyde, whose helter-skelter singing has made Underworld one of the only electronic acts to rely on neither vocal samples nor moonlighting rock stars. Hyde can't find a persuasive substitute for the frantic surrealism of old. His most memorable contribution is the opaque, bluesy melancholy of "Trim." Rarely has a group treaded water with such gusto, and Emerson's presence might not have made all that much difference. But Underworld's frenetic evolution has finally slowed to a halt. *DORIAN LYNSKEY*

KARL HYDE'S CURRENT LISTENING

- VARIOUS ARTISTS ROUGH TRADE SHOPS ELECTRONIC V.1 *MUTE*
- JONI MITCHELL BLUE *REPRISE*



WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

THE 40 MOST POPULAR SONGS IN AMERICA

Avril Lavigne: She's at number 6.

➔ Elvis eats Nelly for breakfast, deep-fries Whitney for lunch and barbecues Eminem for dinner! *Burp*

1 "A LITTLE LESS CONVERSATION"

ELVIS PRESLEY VS. JXL

ELVIS: 30 #1 HITS

For the opening salvo of RCA's Elvis multimedia "relaunching," English DJ JXL tethers a Presley vocal from 1968 to a walloping Fatboy Slim–style beat, and suddenly the Memphis Flash is duking it out over the airwaves with Nelly and Eminem. Even in 2002, it's good to be the King.

3 "WHATCHULOOKINAT"

WHITNEY HOUSTON

WHATCHULOOKINAT

Houston's numerous troubles in the past few years have inspired this venomous tirade — she promises to "turn the cameras back on" the media that first anointed and then wronged her. But don't worry: Her now-husky, always piercing voice is still state of the art on her first single since 1999.

POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"A LITTLE LESS CONVERSATION"	ELVIS PRESLEY VS. JXL	*ELVIS: 30 #1 HITS* RCA
2	"DILEMMA"	NELLY FEATURING KELLY ROWLAND	*NELLYVILLE* FO'REEL/UNIVERSAL
3	"WHATCHULOOKINAT"	WHITNEY HOUSTON	*WHATCHULOOKINAT* ARISTA
4	"CLEANIN' OUT MY CLOSET"	EMINEM	*THE EMINEM SHOW* AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
5	"I NEED A GIRL"	P. DIDDY FEATURING GINUWINE	*WE INVENTED THE REMIX* BAD BOY/ARISTA
6	"COMPLICATED"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	*LET GO* ARISTA
7	"JUST A FRIEND 2002"	MARIO	*MARIO* J RECORDS
8	"GRINDIN' "	CLIPSE	*LORD WILLIN'* STAR TRAK/ARISTA
9	"SPIN"	LIFEHOUSE	*STANLEY CLIMBFALL* DREAMWORKS
10	"IN MY PLACE"	COLDPLAY	*A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD* NETTWERK/CAPITOL
11	"JUST LIKE A PILL"	PINK	*MISSUNDAZTOOD* ARISTA
12	"DON'T KNOW WHY"	NORAH JONES	*COME AWAY WITH ME* BLUE NOTE/VIRGIN
13	"GANGSTA LOVIN' "	EVE FEATURING ALICIA KEYS	*EVE-OLUTION* RUFF RYDERS/INTERSCOPE
14	"HAPPY"	ASHANTI	*ASHANTI* MURDER INC./DEF JAM
15	"AERIALS"	SYSTEM OF A DOWN	*TOXICITY* AMERICAN/COLUMBIA
16	"THE RISING"	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	*THE RISING* COLUMBIA
17	"IN DA WIND"	TRICK DADDY	*THUG HOLIDAY* SLIP-N-SLIDE/ATLANTIC
18	"OUT OF MY HEART (INTO YOUR HEAD)"	BBMAK	*INTO YOUR HEAD* HOLLYWOOD
19	"BY THE WAY"	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	*BY THE WAY* WARNER BROS.
20	"ALL EYEZ ON ME"	MONICA	*HOLD ON* J RECORDS
21	"SOMEWHERE OUT THERE"	OUR LADY PEACE	*GRAVITY* COLUMBIA
22	"HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO"	THE HIVES	*VENI VIDI VICIOUS* BURNING HEART/EPITAPH/SIRE
23	"SK8ER BOI"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	*LET GO* ARISTA
24	"ORDINARY DAY"	VANESSA CARLTON	*BE NOT NOBODY* A&M/INTERSCOPE
25	"FEEL IT BOY"	BEENIE MAN FEATURING JANET	*TROPICAL STORM* VIRGIN
26	"ONE LAST BREATH"	CREED	*WEATHERED* WIND-UP
27	"DAYS GO BY"	DIRTY VEGAS	*DIRTY VEGAS* CAPITOL
28	"GOOD TIMES"	STYLES	*A GANGSTER AND A GENTLEMAN* RUFF RYDERS/INTERSCOPE
29	"SUMMERTIME"	AARON CARTER	*ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE* JIVE
30	"FINE AGAIN"	SEETHER	*DISCLAIMER* WIND-UP
31	"GOODBYE TO YOU"	MICHELLE BRANCH	*THE SPIRIT ROOM* MAVERICK/WARNER BROS.
32	"NEVER AGAIN"	NICKELBACK	*SILVER SIDE UP* ROADRUNNER
33	"IN A LITTLE WHILE"	UNCLE KRACKER	*NO STRANGER TO SHAME* ATLANTIC
34	"OBJECTION (TANGO)"	SHAKIRA	*LAUNDRY SERVICE* EPIC
35	"BARENAKED"	JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT	*BARENAKED* JIVE
36	"FLAKE"	JACK JOHNSON	*BRUSHFIRE FAIRYTALES* ENJOY/UNIVERSAL
37	"GOTTA GET THRU THIS"	DANIEL BEDINGFIELD	*GOTTA GET THRU THIS* ISLAND
38	"LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT"	KYLIE MINOGUE	*FEVER* CAPITOL
39	"I DO (WANNA GET CLOSE TO YOU)"	3LW	*A GIRL CAN MACK* EPIC
40	"RUNNING AWAY"	HOOBASTANK	*HOOBASTANK* ISLAND

8 "GRINDIN' "

CLIPSE

LORD WILLIN'

Is there no stopping the Neptunes? Hip-hop's premier hitmakers have crafted their most minimal track yet for their Virginian pals Clipse. The first artists on the Neptunes' Star Trak imprint, siblings Pusha T. and Malice have scored a Top 10 on urban radio and enjoyed massive MTV airplay.

9 "SPIN"

LIFEHOUSE

STANLEY CLIMBFALL

Last year, this West Coast trio led by singer-songwriter Jason Wade released the quasi-spiritual alt-rock anthem "Hanging by a Moment," 2001's most-played radio track. "Spin," the lead single from Lifehouse's follow-up, *Stanley Climbfall*, carries on in the same hopeful vein.

10 "IN MY PLACE"

COLDPLAY

A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD

Coldplay may be the biggest band in England, but here they've teetered on the verge of one-hit-wonderdom with their wind-lashed-beach classic, "Yellow." Teeter no more: "In My Place," the lead single from their second CD, is already a modern-rock and M2 smash.

Eminem, crouching at number 4

HOW WE DID IT >>>>>

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay, and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."

Chris McPherson (Lavigne); Corbis (Presley); Gary Friedman/LATS/Retna Ltd. (Eminem)

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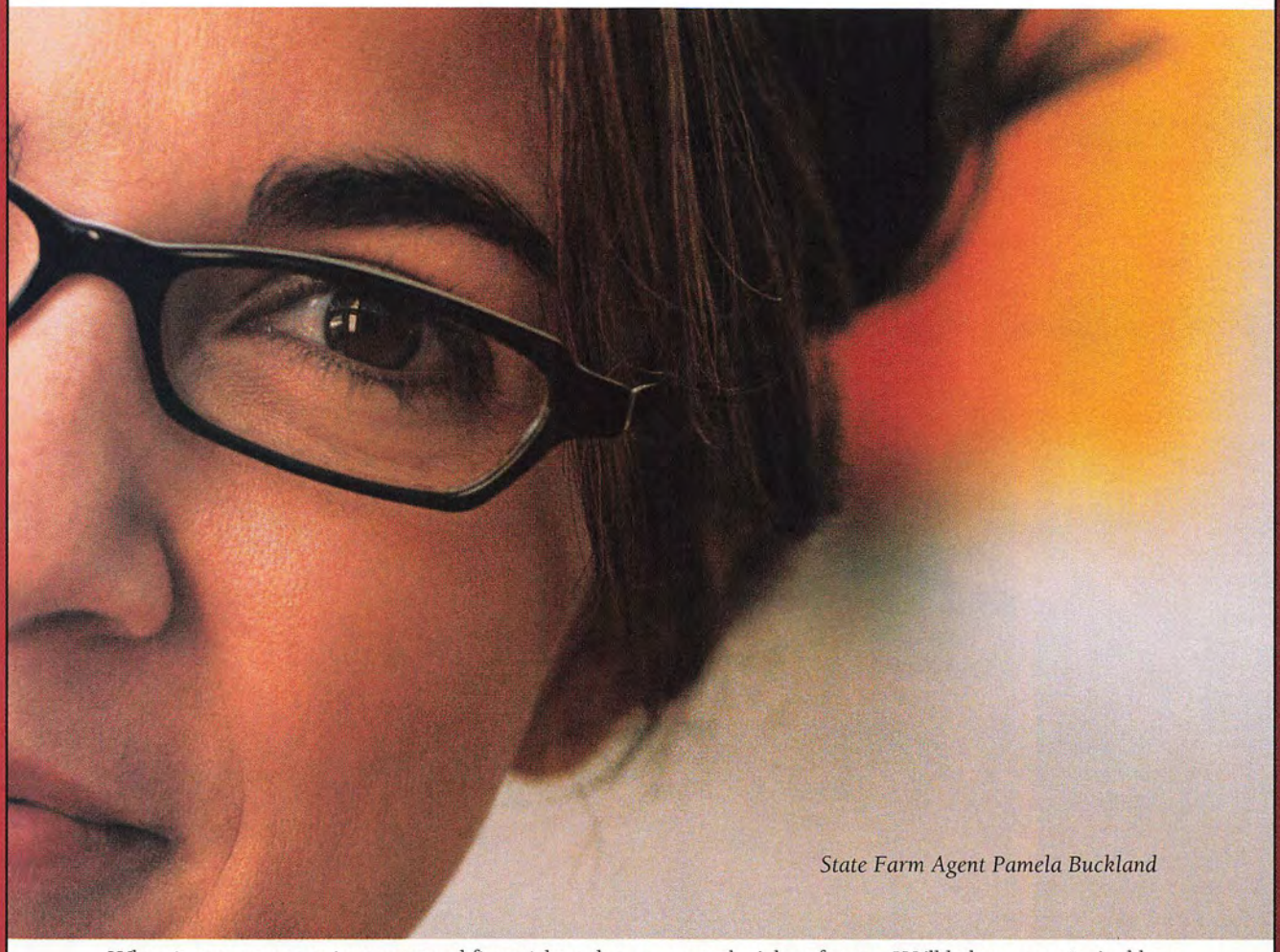

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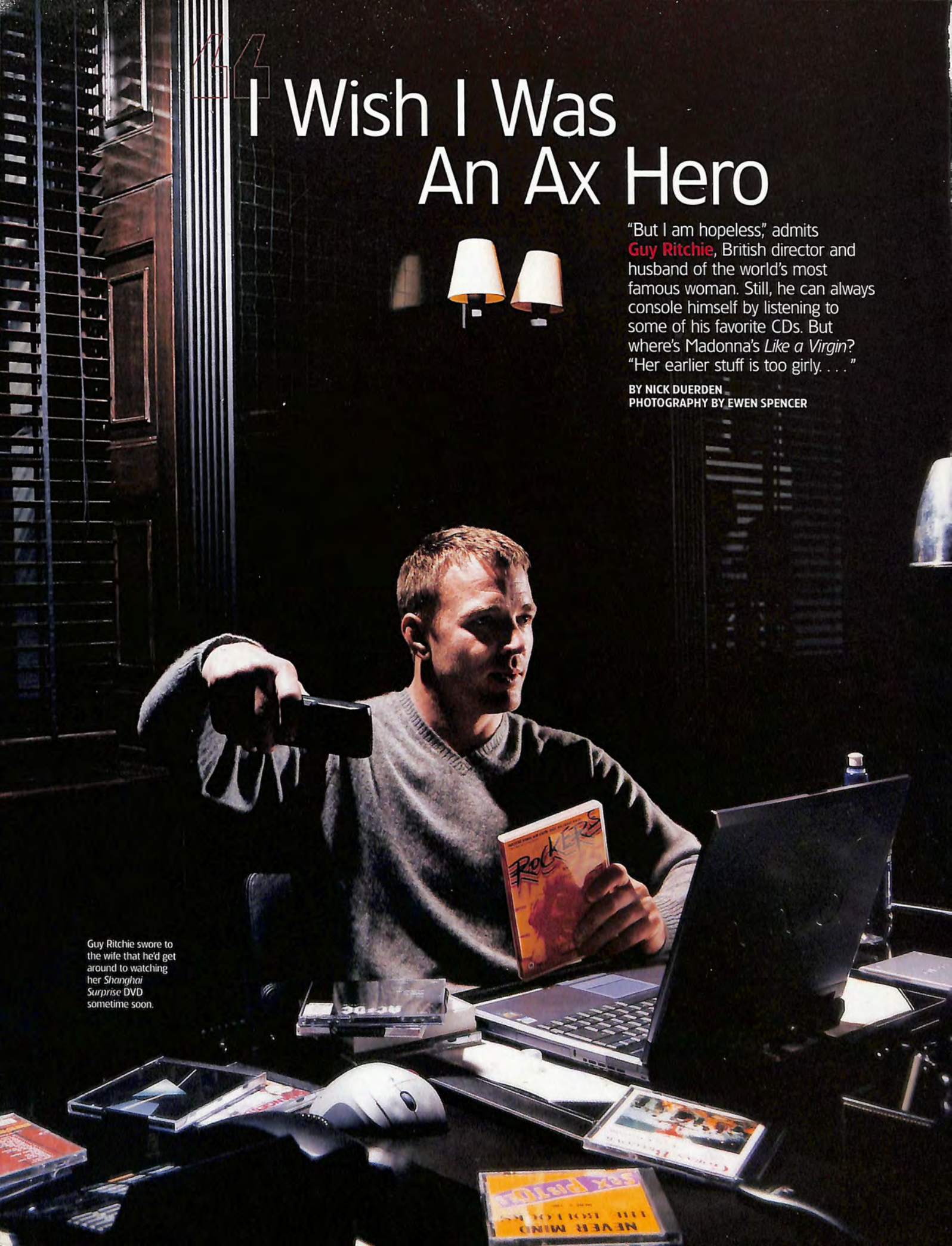
I Wish I Was An Ax Hero

"But I am hopeless," admits **Guy Ritchie**, British director and husband of the world's most famous woman. Still, he can always console himself by listening to some of his favorite CDs. But where's Madonna's *Like a Virgin*? "Her earlier stuff is too girly. . . ."

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EWEN SPENCER



Guy Ritchie swore to the wife that he'd get around to watching her *Shanghai Surprise* DVD sometime soon.

GUY RITCHIE — DIRECTOR of stylish gangster films and husband of the most famous woman on the planet — ascends the grand staircase, turns at the Frida Kahlo painting and strolls into the lounge, where the massive windows overlook central London. Collapsing into the plump sofa, Ritchie, 34, is the lord of all he surveys.

"Yes, I am comfortable," he says. "But comfort leads to complacency, complacency leads to idleness and idleness leads to fuck-all. So I'd rather be somewhere that is at least fractionally uncomfortable. I don't like being in that fuck-all place."

The filmmaker, along with his wife and their two children, has lived in London in the months since he wrapped his new movie, *Swept Away.* "It was initially called *Love, Sex, Drugs and Money,*" he says, "largely because I'm a fan of having alarming titles." After his first two high-octane thrillers — *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch,* starring Brad Pitt — Ritchie's new movie is a love story, with Madonna in the lead role.

"It's the very antithesis of anything I've ever done," Ritchie says. "And working with the wife was nice. She's very diligent, a real pro."

Ritchie, whose wife has enjoyed a fairly successful recording career, is also passionate about music. As he picks up the first of his 10 favorite albums, a knock comes from the connecting kitchen. The door opens a crack, and an eye — the left one — peeks through. Ritchie looks up.

"Hello there, missus. . . . That's a nice eye."

The eye swivels and takes in the scene. "Oh — you're doing an interview," says Mrs. Ritchie. "Sorry, sorry. It can wait." And with that, the door closes, and Madonna's gone.

Ritchie smiles. "Now — where were we?"

ROCKERS

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

ISLAND, 1979

"This Jamaican film is an update of the Robin Hood fable. It's one of the coolest films I've ever seen. I got into it when I was about 14, because I was into reggae and getting high. I wanted to be black for a long time. The music [Peter Tosh, Burning Spear, Bunny Wailer, et al.] is fantastic and full of peace vibes."

TIME OF THE GYPSIES

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

PHONOGRAM, 1989

"If I wasn't going to be a Rastafarian, then I was going to be a Gypsy. I find the whole Romany Gypsy culture very romantic and spiritual. The director [Emir Kusturica, from Yugoslavia] is a genius. And the soundtrack's fantastic: a bit Indian, a bit Arab, a bit Gypsy, raw and wild. I love it."

SEX PISTOLS

NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS

WARNER BROS., 1977

"I was a bit young for this, maybe, but I started early — I was eating mushrooms by the age of 9, son! I got into punk because of its attitude and message. I like people who struggle against society. This record holds up today. Look at the track listing! 'God Save the Queen,' 'Anarchy in the U.K.,' 'Holidays in the Sun!' "

AC/DC

BACK IN BLACK

ATLANTIC, 1980

"Before I was into reggae, I was a major heavy-metal fan: Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Motörhead and AC/DC. I think this would make my top 10 for the cover alone. But the music is fantastic. I've been learning the guitar for something like 20 fucking years now, and I'm still hopeless. But I stick this on, and I wish I was an ax hero."

MADONNA

EROTICA

MAVERICK, 1992

"This was when I first started getting a crush on her. Her earlier stuff was too accessible for me, too girly, but *Erotica* had that edge. I didn't confess to anyone that I liked it, and I kept appropriating my then-girlfriend's copy and playing it really loud in the car. She gets better with age, the wife. The stuff she's working on now is absolute killer."

THE BEATLES

THE BEATLES

CAPITOL, 1968

"This came to me courtesy of my older sister, who had great taste in music. I'm hardly the quintessential Beatles man, but it's very obvious that genius was going on. It makes you wonder what the fuck they were on. And isn't 'Helter Skelter' just the dirtiest song you ever heard?"

SNATCH

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

TVT, 2000

"I chose the music — come on, brother, this is pure class. You've got [10cc's] 'Dreadlock Holiday,' [the Stranglers'] 'Golden Brown,' [Madonna's] 'Lucky Star.' And [the Specials'] 'Ghost Town,' which is a mega, mega track. If I do say so myself, I make a great soundtrack."

PINK FLOYD

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

CAPITOL, 1973

"When Pink Floyd were at their peak, I was still big into my heavy-metal period. This was a whole other scene for me: very trippy, too weird. But when you're older and uglier, you're more accepting of different kinds of music. Listening to this is like seeing colors."

CARL ORFF

THE BEST OF CARL ORFF

BMG, 1999

"I've got an enormous classical collection, but most of it goes 10 feet above my head. I've had experts talk me through it, but it's a complete waste of time. Carl Orff is fantastic, though. I've been thinking of making a siege movie recently, so I've been playing a lot of this."

EMINEM

THE EMINEM SHOW

INTERSCOPE, 2002

"This album is even better than his last one. Eminem's lyrics are amazing. I gather he likes my movies. I'm always being asked to make one of his videos, and I'd be seriously tempted to do so. I'd direct Eminem because he's a talented man, and I've got a lot of time for talent."

AND THE REST...

AFRO-CUBAN ALL STARS A TODA CUBA LE GUSTA **ALPHA** COME FROM HEAVEN **AMERICAN HISTORY X** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **APOLLO 440** GETTIN' HIGH ON YOUR OWN SUPPLY **THE AVALANCHES** SINCE I LEFT YOU **ROY AYERS** WEST COAST VIBES **BACH** BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS **THE BAND** THE BAND **BECK** MELLOW GOLD **BECK** ODELAY **BLUE VELVET** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **BILLY BRAGG AND THE BLOKES** ENGLAND, HALF ENGLISH **BRAHMS** PIANO CONCERTO **R.L. BURNSIDE** TOO BAD JIM **BUSTA RHYMES** WHEN DISASTER STRIKES **CAFÉ DEL MAR** FAR AWAY **MARIA CALLAS** MARIA CALLAS **MANU CHAO** CLANDESTINO **THE CHARLATANS** TELLIN' STORIES **THE CHARLATANS** THE CHARLATANS **THE CLASH** LONDON CALLING **THE CLASH** THE CLASH **THE CLASH** SANDINISTA! **THE CLASH** COMBAT ROCK **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** BLUE ROSE **JOE COCKER** WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS **COLDPLAY** PARACHUTES **CY COLEMAN** IT STARTED WITH A DREAM **JOHN COLTRANE** BLUE TRAIN **COMMON** LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE **NOEL COWARD** TOGETHER WITH MUSIC **CYMANDE** SECOND TIME AROUND **DAFT PUNK** DISCOVERY **DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL** THE PLACES YOU HAVE COME TO FEAR THE MOST **DAVE MATTHEWS BAND** LIVE IN CHICAGO **DAY ONE** ORDINARY MAN **DEBUSSY** LA MER **DE - PHAZZ** GODSDOG **DNTEL** LIFE IS FULL OF POSSIBILITIES **NICK DRAKE** FRUIT TREE **DR. DRE** THE CHRONIC **BOB DYLAN** NEW MORNING **ELUSIVE** PRESSURE DROP **ART FARMER AND BENNY GOLSON** MEET THE JAZZTET **FILA BRAZILLIA** BRAZILIFICATION **GHOSTFACE KILLAH** SUPREME CLIENTELE **BEBEL GILBERTO** TANTO TEMPO **GOLDIE** RING OF SATURN **RUBEN GONZALEZ** INTRODUCING... **GORILLAZ** GORILLAZ **IL CASANOVA** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **THE JAM** ALL MOD CONS **THE JAM** SOUND AFFECTS **RONNY JORDAN** THE QUIET REVOLUTION **KINGS OF CONVENIENCE** VERSUS **KATIA LABEQUE** LITTLE GIRL BLUE **LAMB** LAMB **LED ZEPPELIN** LED ZEPPELIN **LED ZEPPELIN** LED ZEPPELIN II **LED ZEPPELIN** LED ZEPPELIN III **LED ZEPPELIN** LED ZEPPELIN IV **LEFTFIELD** LEFTISM **LEFTFIELD** RHYTHM AND STEALTH **LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **JACQUES LOUSSIER** YOU ONLY LOVE ONCE **BOB MARLEY** BURNIN' **BOB MARLEY** URPRISING **BOB MARLEY** EXODUS **BOB MARLEY** NATTY DREAD **DEAN MARTIN** THE BEST OF BOX SET **JOHN McLAUGHLIN** EXTRAPOLATION **MEAN MACHINE** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **JOHNNY MERCER** JOHNNY MERCER SINGS! **MOLOKO** THINGS TO MAKE AND DO **MORCHEEBA** WHO CAN YOU TRUST? **MOZART** REQUIEM MASS IN D MINOR **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.** LIFE AFTER DEATH **OASIS** DEFINITELY MAYBE **OASIS** WHAT'S THE STORY (MORNING GLORY)? **ORB** U.F.ORB **PHARCYDE** BIZARRE RIDE II **LOUIS PRIMA** DOIN' THE TWIST **PRIMAL SCREAM** SCREAMADELICA **THE PRODIGY** THE FAT OF THE LAND **PROPELLERHEADS** DECKSANDRUMSANDROCKANDROLL **RADIOHEAD** OK COMPUTER **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE** RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE **LOU REED** TRANSFORMER **NINO ROTA** ROMA **RUSHMORE** ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK **SAINT-GERMAIN** DESPRES CAFÉ **SIGUR RÓS** AGÆTIS BYRJUN **THE STRANGLERS** NO MORE HEROES **THE STRANGLERS** LA FOLIE **RICHARD STRAUSS** FRIEDENSTAG (PEACE DAY) **THE STROKES** IS THIS IT **CHARLES STROUSE** MUSICAL LIFE IN CONCERT **SUPERGRASS** SUPERGRASS **TALKING HEADS** STOP MAKING SENSE **TALKING HEADS** SPEAKING IN TONGUES **TRAVIS** THE MAN WHO **TRAVIS** THE INVISIBLE BAND **TRICKY** MAXINQUAYE **TRICKY** BLOWBACK **VARIOUS ARTISTS** AFRICANESQUE **VARIOUS ARTISTS** CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA **VARIOUS ARTISTS** CHILLED IBIZA **VARIOUS ARTISTS** DJ KICKS **VARIOUS ARTISTS** HOTEL COSTES **VARIOUS ARTISTS** LA COLECCION CUBANA **VERDI** BEST OF **THE VERVE** URBAN HYMNS **VIVALDI** LE QUATTROSTAGIONI **KURT WEILL** THE SONGS OF KURT WEILL **CHUCK E. WEISS** EXTREMELY COOL **BARRY WHITE** SHEET MUSIC **ZERO 7** SIMPLE THINGS

Weird Chick!

How a tiny woman with an iceberg voice became the new queen of art-pop

BJÖRK
GREATEST HITS
✪✪✪
ELEKTRA

TEN YEARS AGO, music seemed to be on the verge of seismic changes. Grunge had supposedly destroyed hair metal and AOR. Dance music, it was fashionable to remark, would soon dominate the planet. New artists were dispelling the caricature of the female star as either wistful singer-songwriter or Bambi-eyed bimbo: provocative Tori Amos, scary PJ Harvey. Then there was Björk Gumundsdóttir, a fearless sonic adventuress from sodden Iceland, drawing on any source from world music to big-band jazz to techno. It seemed everything would be different from now on.

Or perhaps not. In 2002, hair metal is hip again, Nickelback and the Calling have reanimated AOR's corpse and the idea that dance music will rule the planet seems as quaint as a '50s sci-fi movie that predicts everyone will soon own a flying saucer. As for female stars, well, they *do* make 'em like they used to: Take your pick from Dido, Jewel or Britney. Amos's star has dimmed. PJ Harvey remains an acquired taste. Despite respectable sales and an Oscar nomination, Björk has never crossed over from cult heroine to bona fide superstar.

This collection, selected by Björk's fans via her Web site, suggests some reasons for that fate. Though it's centered around her singles, her biggest hit, the irritating show-tune parody "It's Oh So Quiet," is a surprise omission. Maybe even her most devoted partisans sigh when she turns up the knob marked "kooky." In its place comes the new track, "It's in Our Hands," a sweet melody marooned above chattering, scraping electronics — lovely, but less immediate than the fan choices.

Björk's skill as a songwriter, often overlooked because of her remarkable, fluttery voice and the quirkiness of her instrumental backdrops, is abundantly evident. "Venus as a Boy," from her first solo album, 1993's *Debut*, is slinkily sensual; "Play Dead" boasts a chorus that's both original and implausibly epic; and the race from tinkling ambient intro to pounding techno finale in "Hyperballad" still sparkles and thrills.

In the later material, her grasp of melody remains strong, but she seems to be fleeing to the margins. "Hunter" (from 1997) and "Pagan Poetry" (2001) are less straightforward, their hooks buried amid the weird arrangements. Similarly, her live appearances have become more recherché. A comedian who wanted to lampoon avant-garde obscurity might imagine a singer performing with a gay electronica duo and an Inuit choir — precisely how Björk chose to promote last year's *Vespertine*.

It may be worth noting that Björk looked miserable in the mid-'90s, when she was on the cusp of stardom. She attacked a reporter in a Thailand airport, a crazed fan (who later videotaped his suicide) attempted to kill her with a mail bomb and another stalker broke into her mother's home. "I thought I could organize freedom," she dolefully sings on "Hunter," recorded a year after the airport attack and murder attempt. "How Scandinavian of me."

Whether deliberate rejection of mainstream celebrity or not, the more recent tracks make listeners work harder. That doesn't make them lesser songs. "Jóga" is a show-stopping, string-laden ballad. *Vespertine*'s "Pagan Poetry" and "Hidden Place" quiver with the sort of urgent sexuality Marvin Gaye would understand.

Perhaps Björk's dwindling sales are part of a deliberate self-preservation plan. Or maybe they prove that music has dumbed down recently — Radiohead aside, the last 10 years have seen a shift from complexity and depth to brash immediacy.

Either way, these 15 tracks hold more interesting notions and twists than some artists explore in their entire careers. Ten years separate "Human Behavior" and "It's in Our Hands," with no discernible dip in invention. Björk's ideas keep coming thick and fast. *ALEXIS PETRIDIS*

Björk demonstrates an Icelandic hangover remedy.

This page: Tim Bauer/Head Press/Retna Ltd. Opposite page: Joseph Cultice/Corbis Outline

Björk's skill as a songwriter is often overlooked because of her fluttery voice and quirky instrumentation.

BLACK UHURU

THE BEST OF BLACK UHURU: THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION ✪✪✪✪

ISLAND

Crib notes for the greatest, funkiest reggae group of the '80s

The first reggae musicians to win a Grammy, back in 1984, Black Uhuru were also the most progressive practitioners of the music in the early '80s, before electronics turned reggae into dancehall. While the Jamaican/American vocal trio sang about world-wide ghetto life in a thick but not impenetrable Rasta patois, its sound was defined by producers Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, a celebrated rhythm section with studio tricks, insistent hooks and ping-pong rhythms that drew from, and pushed the envelope of, post-disco street funk. This 11-track sampler skims the surface of an album act whose peak-era grooves — the dub-enriched "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" and "Sponji Reggae" — deliver the revolutionary fervor of Bob Marley's poetry. *BARRY WALTERS*

THE SCORE

✪✪✪✪✪ EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

✪✪✪✪ GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

✪✪✪ VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

✪✪ JUST OK

✪ WEAK

BURNING SPEAR

THE BEST OF BURNING SPEAR: THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION ✪✪✪✪

ISLAND

The elder statesman of roots reggae remains a spiritual eminence

When Burning Spear auditioned at Studio One in the late '60s, Jamaican music had yet to hear anything as overtly African and uncompromisingly Rasta. The label didn't know what to do with the music, and delayed releasing it so long that singer Winston Rodney left Kingston to farm in St. Anns. But the business eventually caught up, and under the guidance of Ocho Rios producer Jack Ruby, Burning Spear dominated the late '70s with the most profoundly affecting roots music ever made. This set brings together the best of that smoky, weary, hauntingly spiritual repertoire, with "Social Living," "Dry and Heavy," "Door Peep" and the magnificent, historical "Marcus Garvey." *LLOYD BRADLEY*

JOHNNY CASH

AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN ✪✪✪

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Previously unreleased live album catches legend in his popular prime

When Johnny Cash walked onstage at Madison Square Garden in December 1969, he wasn't just a country singer — he was a star, period. That summer, "A Boy Named Sue" had given him his biggest pop hit (three weeks at number 2), and ABC had renewed his TV variety hour, *The Johnny Cash Show*. Yet this is hardly a parade of hits (Cash fobs off "I Walk the Line" and "Ring of Fire" on the Carter Family and the Statler Brothers, respectively). Instead, this self-described "dove with claws" offers songs about God and country that presage Jimmy Carter's caring liberalism while supporting "our boys" in Vietnam. Riveting work by a complex artist. *J.D. CONSIDINE*

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

THE BEST OF FAIRPORT CONVENTION: THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION ✪✪✪✪

A&M

Slightly skimpy 10-track roundup of the Brit folk-rock pioneers' early days

One of those bands whose various incarnations resemble a forest more than a family tree, Fairport Convention began as the English answer to Jefferson Airplane, then decided instead to invent folk-rock — its British version, anyway — on their fourth release, 1970's still-awesome *Liege & Lief*. In this creation, they were aided immensely by boasting Britain's best drummer (Dave Mattacks), fiddler (Dave Swarbrick), guitarist (Richard Thompson) and singer (Sandy Denny, as heard on *Led Zeppelin IV*). Three decades, about a trillion lineups and several tragic demises later, they're still going — but this compilation wisely concentrates on those early years, with Denny's "Who Knows Where the Time Goes?", "Matty Groves" and the epic, almost jam band–style "Sloth," from 1970's *Liege* follow-up, *Full House*, which is even better. *CLARK COLLIS*

The King Returns

Elvis Presley is gone, but not forgotten: 30 classics from the best singer who ever lived

Presley's name change to "Elvi" proved short-lived.

ELVIS PRESLEY

ELVIS 30 #1 HITS ✪✪✪✪✪

RCA

NOTHING BETTER illustrates the nature of Elvis Presley's appeal than the JXL remix of a forgotten 1968 single, "A Little Less Conversation," used by Nike this summer for its World Cup ad campaign. Everything great about Presley (his casual sexiness, his Dixie soul, his hokey humor) is in "Conversation." To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of his undignified death atop a toilet — hardly the final throne the King deserved — RCA offers 30 of his chart-toppers, spanning 1955 to 1973, as one more epitaph for an icon who will not die.

Presley was the beginning and the end of rock & roll. His lips and piston hips inaugurated rock's golden age, and his squalid demise marked its close. He was a Tupelo, Mississippi, cracker with the looks of a Greek god. He was the original wigga, a backwoods Caucasian with deep black soul and debonair style.

The King's greatest recordings were the rockabilly missiles launched from the Sun studio in Memphis, but his smash hits in the second half of the '50s — the spectral "Heartbreak Hotel" and the jumping, comically homoerotic "Jailhouse Rock" — made rock the language of teen culture.

Because he remained courtly, even when his sexuality was threatening, Presley liberated white America from its suburban conformities. Sure, there's sap here ("Love Me Tender," "Are You Lonesome Tonight"), but on the lascivious "All Shook Up" and the strutting version of Big Mama Thornton's "Hound Dog," Presley decreed what it meant to rock hard.

He rose from his pilled-up stupor at the end of the '60s and cut a few more seminal songs, including "In the Ghetto," "Suspicious Minds" and "Burning Love," which marked the rhinestone redneck's return from Las Vegas to Memphis, his funky adopted hometown.

When the King reconnected with the South, he was on solid ground. The commemoration of his death this August prompted an avalanche of Presleyiana. But this is the real Elvis autobiography. *BARNEY HOSKYNS*

The Flying Burrito Brothers: four men, no comb

THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS

SIN CITY: THE VERY BEST OF THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS ✪✪✪✪✪

A&M

An essential collection from the band that put the *alt* in alt-country

Like their frontman, Gram Parsons, the Flying Burrito Brothers lived fast, died young and left a good-looking corpse. The original lineup recorded two albums in as many years, but established the sound and sensibility of alternative country. (Even before *Sin City*, A&M released as many compilations as the band did albums.) To the Burritos, their sound wasn't country rock, but the summation of rock's late-'60s ambitions — "cosmic American music," as Parsons said. *Sin City* collects the two Parsons albums in their entirety, from the stark visions of American Babylon on "Sin City" to the rural soul of "Dark End of the Street" to their ragged take on "Wild Horses." Essential for anyone looking for the missing link between Johnny Cash and Uncle Tupelo.

ROBERT LEVINE

ARETHA FRANKLIN

THE QUEEN IN WAITING (THE COLUMBIA YEARS 1960–1965) ✪✪

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

The Queen of Soul, before she earned her royal crown

When Aretha Franklin got to Atlantic Records in 1966, her piano playing, songwriting, and gospel-trained voice quickly made her the Queen of Soul. But before that, she also had an often-forgotten career on Columbia Records. Franklin's first label tried to make this preacher's daughter a secular star by using saccharine orchestral backdrops and Tin Pan Alley fare like "Skylark." As the title of this two-disc compilation suggests, Franklin had already found her voice as early as 1961 on the winning "Nobody Like You" and her lone Columbia hit, "Today I Sing the Blues." Detached from her gospel roots, she was just another deft singer.

K. LEANDER WILLIAMS

THE HELLACOPTERS

CREAM OF THE CRAP ✪✪✪

GEARHEAD

Swedish raw-rockers never heard an MC5 album they didn't like

The Hellacopters have flown the flag for high-energy, Detroit-style hard rock ever since singer-guitarist Nick Royale (like fellow Swedes the Hives, the Hellacopters favor fake stage names) quit the black-metal band Entombed in 1994. *Cream of the Crap* collects singles unattached to their four albums, including covers of Social Distortion's "The Creeps," Iggy Pop's "I Got a Right" and the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter." Their debt to various rawk forefathers is so pronounced, you could accuse the 'Copters of being a cover band. The name of their game is kicking ass, not innovating: From "Rock Hammer" to "Televison Addict," *Cream* is relentless, unmodified early-'70s protopunk, as good as 1998's *Supershitty to the Max*.

ROB KEMP

JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

SMASH HITS ✪✪✪

MCA

Even now, the world's greatest guitarist sounds light years ahead

When it was released in 1969, Jimi Hendrix's first singles collection included several songs that had been left off the American version of *Are You Experienced* — most notably the blistering blues "Red House." On the other hand, it excluded B-sides that were on the U.K. version of *Smash Hits*, including the experimental guitar freakout "The Stars That Play With Laughing Sam's Dice." This meant that any experienced Hendrix fan in the U.S. needed both import albums to be a completist. Still, on its own terms, this collection — which features the classics "Purple Haze," "Fire" and "All Along the Watchtower" — shows not just how adventurous Hendrix was, but also how eclectic. And how about some respect ➔

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

CLIVE BARKER
Writer, director, all-around scary man

ELMER BERNSTEIN
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK *KOCH*

"I'd never seen the movie before. It's such exciting music. I've been playing it over and over."

The Rolling Stones, moments after leaving their accountant's office

Satisfaction!

Want to become the greatest rock & roll band in the world? All you have to do is improve on this. . . .

ROLLING STONES

ENGLAND'S NEWEST HIT MAKERS	✪✪✪
12 x 5	✪✪✪✪✪
THE ROLLING STONES NOW!	✪✪✪✪✪
OUT OF OUR HEADS (U.S.)	✪✪✪✪
OUT OF OUR HEADS (U.K.)	✪✪✪✪
DECEMBER'S CHILDREN	✪✪✪✪
BIG HITS	✪✪✪✪
AFTERMATH (U.S.)	✪✪✪✪✪
AFTERMATH (U.K.)	✪✪✪✪✪
GOT LIVE IF YOU WANT IT!	✪✪✪
BETWEEN THE BUTTONS (U.S.)	✪✪✪✪✪
BETWEEN THE BUTTONS (U.K.)	✪✪✪✪
FLOWERS	✪✪✪✪
THEIR SATANIC MAJESTIES REQUEST	✪✪✪
BEGGARS BANQUET	✪✪✪✪✪
THROUGH THE PAST, DARKLY	✪✪✪✪
LET IT BLEED	✪✪✪✪✪
GET YER YA-YA'S OUT	✪✪✪
HOT ROCKS 1964–1971	✪✪✪✪
MORE HOT ROCKS	✪✪✪
METAMORPHOSIS	✪✪✪
SINGLES COLLECTION	✪✪✪✪

ABKCO

THE ROLLING STONES were the first band to accept corporate tour sponsorship (back in 1981 — from cheesy cologne Jovan, no less), and ever since, they've been suspected of outrageous efforts to further pad their fur-lined pockets.

Yet they've done little to exploit their best music. Their 1960s records have not been reissued since 1986, when digital remastering technology was relatively primitive. The Stones are starting a U.S. tour in September — does Mick need to buy another mansion? Does Keith need money for rehab? — which also occasions a CD overhaul of their early years.

This bonanza of 22 titles includes the odd 1975 outtakes collection *Metamorphosis*, never previously released on CD in the U.S., and original U.S. *and* U.K. versions of *Out of Our Heads*, *Between the Buttons* and *Aftermath*, which vary by a song or two. But with no bonus tracks, superior sound quality is the only attraction here. And with hastily recorded, covers-heavy albums like 1964's *England's Newest Hit Makers*, shining a light on the sonics isn't necessarily good. Who wants to put baby pictures under a microscope?

Fortunately, matters improve swiftly with 1965's *December's Children* and the crucial *Aftermath*, when the deluge of classics begins: "Get Off of My Cloud," "As Tears Go By," "Paint It Black" and "Under My Thumb." Most of these are also on the several hits compilations, with the incessant *Hot Rocks* serving as *Rolling Stones for Dummies*.

But it's the later material that really merits added finesse: The piano on "Sympathy for the Devil" (from 1968's *Beggars Banquet*) is transformed from agreeable tinkle to apocalyptic hammering. But the real mug-an-orphan-if-you-have-to purchase is 1969's *Let It Bleed*, a filler-free classic even on eight-track. Hearing "Monkey Man" now feels like standing in the middle of a gorilla cage. And Jimmy Miller's production, new boy Mick Taylor's stinging guitar solos and even Keef's wayward but wonderful whine on "You Got the Silver" are all individually worth the price of admission.

CLARK COLLIS

Opposite page: ©Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. This page, clockwise from top left: Jim McCrary; Corbis; Susan Goldman/Retna Ltd.

Mad as F#@%

Rap was light and jolly. Until N.W.A created gangsta rap. *Boo-ya!*

N.W.A

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON ✪✪✪✪✪

EFIL4ZAGGIN ✪✪✪✪✪

EMI/CAPITOL

WITH ALL DUE respect to Run-DMC, no group had as profound an influence on rap as N.W.A. Unapologetically violent, overflowing with expletives and muddled in misogyny, N.W.A's repertoire was hip-hop's Pandora's box — an ultimate license to ill whose impact is still felt on any contemporary, street-endorsed rap album.

A string of endless imitators has not diminished the power of N.W.A's original recordings, now newly remastered. The epochal *Straight Outta Compton* (1988) depicts the grime of ghetto life (drugs, mean gangs, meaner police) with an almost cinematic vividness. Although the late Eazy-E is showcased as the group's charismatic figurehead, chief lyricist Ice Cube earns credit for the thematic focus. His twangy L.A. bark proves as capable of expressing unmitigated rage (the infamous "Fuck tha Police") as absurd humor ("Gangsta Gangsta," in which he interrupts a violent narrative with the punch line "We didn't get no play from the ladies/With six niggas in a car, are you crazy?"). Following his lead, *Compton* teeters remarkably between tragedy and comedy.

Dr. Dre, who produced with DJ Yella, was N.W.A's linchpin, constructing a dazzling fusion of densely stacked samples and live instruments. On 1991's Cube-less *Efil4zaggin* (repackaged to include the excellent 1990 EP *100 Miles and Runnin'*), it's the good doctor's sonic swamp that makes the album even more ferocious than its predecessor.

Having incurred the wrath of the FBI, N.W.A refocus on fulfilling their boast of being "the world's most dangerous group" — claiming immortality on the roaring "Real Niggaz Don't Die," defending their impolitic name on the title track and disparaging copycats on the frenetic "Real Niggaz," on which Dre asks, "How the fuck you think rap will last/With your ass saying shit that I said in the past?" It's a prescient question: Since 1988, rappers have gotten famous trying, and failing, to match N.W.A's blazing start. *CHAIRMAN MAO*

N.W.A: "Who wants to go for ice cream?"

for Mitch Mitchell, who next to Keith Moon was easily the most explosive drummer of the era?

BILLY ALTMAN

KISS

THE VERY BEST ✪✪✪✪

MERCURY

The latest, but probably not last, hits collection from the Godzillas of rawk

Kiss Kaskets, Kiss Kondoms, *Tongue* magazine — there appears to be no end to the entrepreneurial efforts of Kiss bassist Gene Simmons. His extra-musical pursuits may have no value to anyone but obsessive kollectors, but this compilation of Kiss's best tunes is hard to dismiss as sheer opportunism. What distinguishes *The Very Best* from the band's four (!) previous hits collections is the glorious presence of Ace Frehley's 1978 solo single "New York Groove," plus a version of "Rock and Roll All Nite" from *Alive!* and two post-makeup singles (the vile "Forever," cowritten by Michael Bolton, and the overblown "God Gave Rock and Roll to You"). But the other 17 songs, from the drooling "Doctor Love" to the fist-pumping "Shout It Out Loud," constitute the template of hair metal in one place. And that's no rip-off.

ROB KEMP

LIVING COLOUR

VIVID ✪✪✪✪

SONY/LEGACY

Living Colour's 1988 debut brought the promise of a black-rock revolution

Vivid was a newsworthy release: Four black musicians playing heavy metal. Sadly, the black-rock trend never panned out, and now, the band's music has become its greatest legacy. A landmark fusion, *Vivid* is the glorious sound of smart people — especially shred-master guitarist Vernon Reid and super-drummer Will Calhoun — rocking very hard, goosed by hardcore, funk and avant-jazz. There are hooks here ("Glamour Boys"), but Living Colour are best when busting out brontosaurian riffs ("Cult of Personality"). While the humongous '80s drum sound hasn't aged well, *Vivid* still kicks. Five killer bonus tracks — a revelatory remix with Public Enemy, a Clash cover and infernal live cuts — seal the deal.

MICHAEL AZERRAD

Jimi Hendrix: never a big fan of beige

THE RAMONES

END OF THE CENTURY ✪✪

PLEASANT DREAMS ✪✪✪

SUBTERRANEAN JUNGLE ✪✪✪

TOO TOUGH TO DIE ✪✪✪✪

RHINO

Punk pioneers suffer midlife crisis, recover fully

By 1980, the Ramones had spread punk rock like leather-jacketed Johnny Appleseeds. After revolution, what do you do for an encore? Enter Wall of Sound producer Phil Spector. The legendary maverick engineered a disaster on *End of the Century*, emphasizing Joey's vocals on the nostalgic "Do You Remember Rock n' Roll Radio?" at the expense of the Ramones' collective energy. With metal-ish songs taking a stand against the KKK, jobs and (again) radio, *Pleasant Dreams* was a return to form, and 1983's *Subterranean Jungle* added '60s covers to their loving legacy. The Ramones' last masterpiece, *Too Tough to Die* (1984), rages at full force. Joey glowers and snarls, while bassist Dee Dee jabbers maniacally on "Wart Hog" and "Endless Vacation." Added-value alert: Each disc offers a minimum of six bonus tracks, mostly demos or alternate takes that sometimes surpass the official versions.

JON YOUNG

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

LIVE FROM NEW YORK CITY ✪✪

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

An early acoustic set from the short/tall Queens, New York–born duo

This previously unreleased concert from January 1967 was recorded at Lincoln Center, in the same city as the feuding folk duo's famous live release, 1982's *Concert in Central Park* — but that's the only similarity. Where their Central Park reunion show found Simon & Garfunkel backed by a vast band of session players, this 19-song set, a relic of the late-'60s moment when Serious Rock Poetry was treated with reverence, could not be more spare, featuring just

From top: Howard Tyler/Retna Ltd., Terence Donovan/Camera Press Digital/Retna Ltd.

Simon, Garfunkel and a host of the former's finest early tunes, including "Homeward Bound," plus the rarity "A Church Is Burning." The result may be too earnest for some; you can almost hear the audience stroking their beards — and that's just the women.
CLARK COLLIS

VARIOUS ARTISTS

A CELLARFUL OF MOTOWN! ✪✪✪✪

MOTOWN

More Motown: Unheard discards from America's greatest pop label

At this late date, it's hard to imagine any new gems emerging from the well-scoured Motown vaults. However, the two-disc, 40-track *Cellarful* brims with enticing, unreleased songs. While heavyweights Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and the Temptations appear, the real stars are less-celebrated performers who failed to ring the cash registers consistently (if at all), among them the Monitors, the Velvelettes and J.J. Barnes. Some songs went unreleased because they weren't good enough, but others sound like lost hits: sultry Brenda Holloway's "How Can I," Tammi Terrell's wistful "All I Do Is Think About You" (which author Wonder recorded 14 years later for *Hotter Than July*), the Contours' stomping remake of the Marvelettes' "Danger Heartbreak Dead Ahead" and the Lewis Sisters' dramatic "Don't Make Me Live Without Your Love," written and produced by Motown founder Berry Gordy.
JON YOUNG

VARIOUS ARTISTS

THE COMPLETE UK UPSETTER SINGLES COLLECTION

VOLUME 1 ✪✪✪
VOLUME 2 ✪✪✪
VOLUME 3 ✪✪✪✪
VOLUME 4 ✪✪✪

TROJAN

Hits, misses and backfires from a label devoted to the productions of Lee "Scratch" Perry

Between 1969 and 1973, the British label Upsetter cranked out around 100 Jamaican-made singles produced by Lee "Scratch" Perry, collected on these double-disc sets. *Volume 1* is mostly sedate instrumentals (by Perry's band the Upsetters) and such oddball covers as "Hello Dolly" by Pat Satchmo. On the second volume, Perry hooks up with a young Bob Marley, and begins pairing vocal songs with organ-led instrumental versions. Marley contributes some classics like "Kaya" to the third set, which also includes Junior Byles's exquisite "A Place Called Africa" and some DJ favorites by U. Roy. By the final volume, Perry's gotten very weird, making endless versions of Byles's "Beat Down Babylon" rhythm and spewing invective about his rival reggae producers.
DOUGLAS WOLK

VARIOUS ARTISTS

TROJAN D.J. BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
JAMAICAN HITS BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
LOVERS BOX SET ✪✪✪
MOD REGGAE BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
RASTAFARI BOX SET ✪✪✪
ROCKSTEADY BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
ROOTS BOX SET ✪✪✪
SKA BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
SKINHEAD REGGAE BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
SOULFUL REGGAE BOX SET ✪✪✪✪
UK HITS BOX SET ✪✪✪✪✪

TROJAN

The ultimate cross-section of Jamaican pop music

Practically every Jamaican pop scene from the dawn of ska through the mid-'70s heyday of reggae is covered by these bargain-priced 50-song, three-CD sets, which focus on specific styles and audiences, collecting hits, oddities, rip-offs and lost jewels. *Rocksteady* comprises 1966–'68 midtempo dance faves by Alton Ellis and his acolytes; the *Mod* and *Skinhead* boxes document Jamaican singles that London subcultures were into; *Soulful* is scrappy reggae covers of American soul hits (and *Lovers* offers numerous covers as well). The less boppy *Rastafari* and *Roots* sets concentrate more on slower '70s tunes with solemn lyrics. Best of all is *UK Hits*: songs by Jimmy Cliff and Desmond Dekker, among others, that crossed over to the British charts — spreading reggae's influence abroad. →
DOUGLAS WOLK

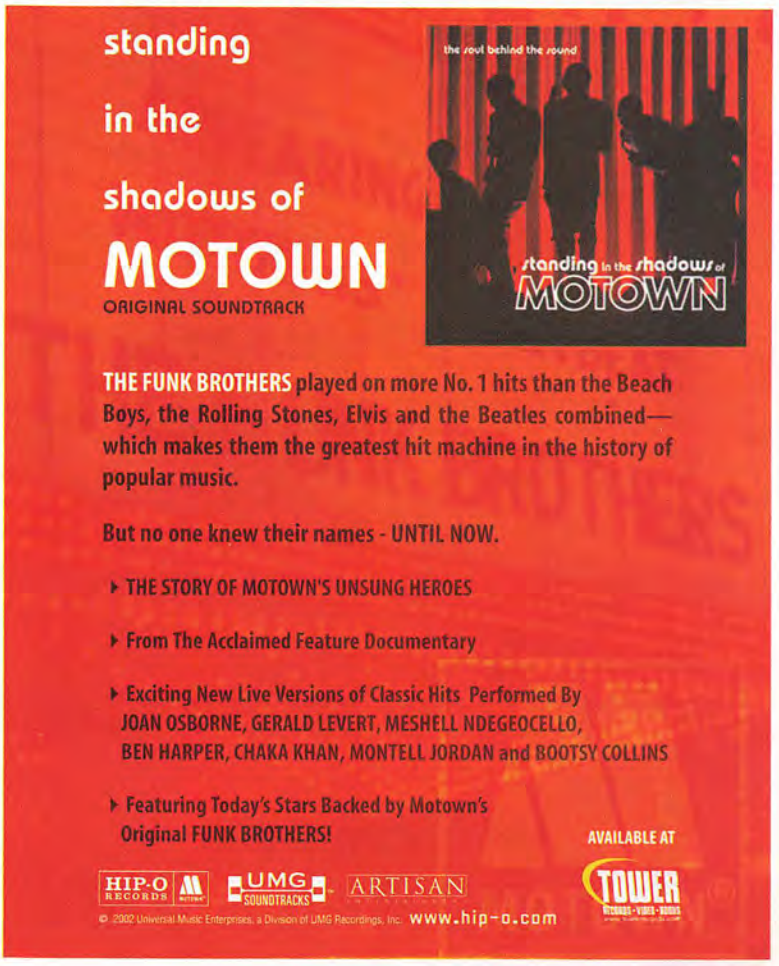
LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

JARED LETO
Got the crap beat out of him in Fight Club *and* Panic Room

JOY DIVISION
UNKNOWN PLEASURES
WARNER BROS.

"I'm struck by their simplicity. I wasn't exposed to them much when I was younger, so it's nice to catch up."

Kathryn Indeck/Wireimage.com



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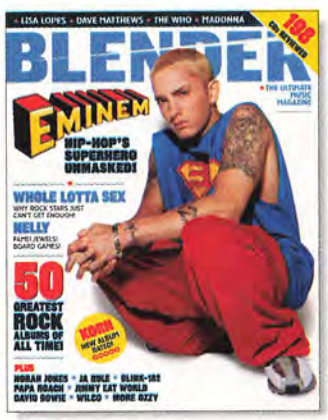

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VARIOUS ARTISTS

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN VOLUME 1: WALK RIGHT IN ✪✪✪✪

VOLUME 2: THE FIRST TIME I MET THE BLUES ✪✪✪✪✪

VOLUME 3: THAT'S CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE ✪✪✪

VOLUME 4: THAT'S ALL RIGHT ✪✪✪✪

RCA BLUEBIRD

Roots of rock: four blues compilations covering 25 years

This diverse survey of blues from 1927 to 1952 draws from RCA's catalog, one of the deepest vaults in music. It emphasizes original versions of songs that became blues standards or were revived by pop acts, and traces blues-rock back to its sources: If you want to know where Elvis Presley's "That's All Right" or AC/DC's "Baby Please Don't Go" originated (Arthur Crudup and Big Joe Williams, respectively), here's your answer. But it's also full of less-celebrated oddities (Leadbelly's "Ham and Eggs"), sublime jive (the Mississippi Sheiks' "Sales Tax") and blood-curdling sexual conflict (Lizzie Miles's "I Hate a Man Like You").

JOHN MORTHLAND

THE WHO

MY GENERATION (DELUXE EDITION) ✪✪✪✪

MCA

The well-spent youth of a great band, before it discovered rock operas and Meher Baba

Like other players in the original British Invasion, the Who worshiped American R&B: This two-disc expansion of their 1965 debut offers leaden covers of James Brown and Bo Diddley. But Pete Townshend's witty originals reveal a fiery quartet capable of three-minute perfection and not yet seduced by high concepts. The restless anthems "My Generation" and "The Kids Are Alright" epitomize boyish bravado, balancing finesse and brutality. Bonus material from the same era includes the killer single "I Can't Explain," an alternate take of "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere" and the unreleased joke tune "Instant Party Mixture." Roger Daltrey's big vocals and Townshend's guitar are sometimes overshadowed by John Entwistle's rumbling bass and the headlong drums of Keith Moon, whose joyous clatter remains fresh even after endless hearings.

JON YOUNG

Blender Approved

The pick of recent reissues

THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC

BUDDHA/BMG HERITAGE

Playing breezy blues and folk-rock with optimistic cheer, the Lovin' Spoonful were unmistakably products of the '60s.

EARTH, WIND & FIRE

THE ESSENTIAL EARTH, WIND & FIRE

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

From sophisto-disco ("Boogie Wonderland") to senior-prom ballads ("Reasons"), these '70s soulsters had a jam for every occasion.

SAM MOORE

PLENTY GOOD LOVIN'

2K SOUNDS

Prime soul from half of Memphis legends Sam & Dave — shelved for 32 years, now finally liberated.

VIOLENT FEMMES

VIOLENT FEMMES

SLASH/RHINO

The musical equivalent of a brat attack — three raging Milwaukeeans play acoustic punk about their bad luck. Someone needs a time-out!

REISSUES IN BRIEF >>>>>>> BY ROB KEMP

BLACK SABBATH

PAST LIVES ✪✪✪

SANCTUARY

The spectacle of a domesticated Ozzy Osbourne on MTV will never diminish the fearsome intensity of prime Black Sabbath. Recorded in 1976, this two-disc live album doesn't offer the ultimate metal band at its peak, but "Tomorrow's Dream" and "Snowblind" still sound like a woolly mammoth ramming headfirst into a brick wall.

DEAD KENNEDYS

FRESH FRUIT FOR ROTTING VEGETABLES ✪✪✪✪

CHERRY RED

For a moment, the Bay Area's Dead Kennedys seemed like America's mocking answer to the Sex Pistols. The 1980 debut of Jello Biafra's band, featuring the hilariously scabrous "Kill the Poor" and the similarly insincere "California Über Alles," remains their definitive statement, like Green Day gone Marxist.

FOREIGNER

DOUBLE VISION ✪✪✪✪

HEAD GAMES ✪✪✪

RHINO

Forming a bridge from Led Zeppelin to Def Leppard with these two late-'70s AOR gold mines, this Anglo-American combo specialized in thick, grand riffs and crass innuendo, as in the rather obvious title of *Head Games*, which shows new-wave influences. Lou Gramm's soulful yelp and guitarist Mick Jones's crafty writing made karaoke classics out of "Hot Blooded" and "Dirty White Boy."

EMMYLOU HARRIS

ROSES IN THE SNOW ✪✪✪✪

WARNER BROS./RHINO

Twenty years before *O Brother*, when the music business treated mountain music like a drooling grandma hidden in the attic, ingénue Harris brazenly recorded this collection of bluegrass, Appalachian music and, er, Paul Simon. With cameos by Dolly Parton and Linda Ronstadt, *Roses* showcases Harris's faultless soprano and curatorial smarts.

ALBERT KING

BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN ✪✪✪✪✪

STAX

Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan and thousands of bluesmen owe an enormous debt to the pinched, minimalist guitar stylings of Mississippi's King. On this landmark 1967 collection of singles, recorded with Booker T. and the MG's, King used Southern soul to revive lagging interest in electric blues.

CHUCK MANGIONE

THE BEST OF CHUCK MANGIONE: THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION ✪✪

A&M

Recently rediscovered via numerous cameos on *King of the Hill*, this Rochester, New York–born trumpeter was the Kenny G. of his day. "Land of Make Believe" is ambitious for '70s lite jazz, but his signal achievement is the supersmooth funk-corn masterpiece "Feels So Good," now playing in an elevator near you.

NOFX

45 OR 46 SONGS THAT WEREN'T GOOD ENOUGH TO GO ON OUR OTHER RECORDS ✪

FAT WRECK CHORDS

Funny title, huh? And at least as creative as the unremarkable punk-pop these San Franciscans have played for almost 20 years. NOFX are a fine live band, but to anyone who didn't grow up riding a skateboard, these are little more than third-rate comedy routines.

OH-OK

THE COMPLETE OH-OK ✪✪✪

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

From Athens, Georgia, Oh-OK were fronted by Lynda Stipe (bassist, vocalist and sister of R.E.M.'s Michael), and also included future power-pop savant Matthew Sweet. Their three EPs, all from the early '80s (complemented by eight previously unreleased tunes), still sound fresher than other quirky new wave — owing to their angular, faux-naive and guitarless charm.

OLATUNJI

DRUMS OF PASSION ✪✪✪✪✪

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

In 1959, Nigerian emigrant Babatunde Olatunji released this exciting barrage of polyrhythmic percussion. *Drums of Passion* eventually sold 5 million units, making it the first pure product of the African diaspora to reach a mass audience.

ELVIS PRESLEY

ROOTS REVOLUTION: THE LOUISIANA HAYRIDE RECORDINGS ✪

TOMATO

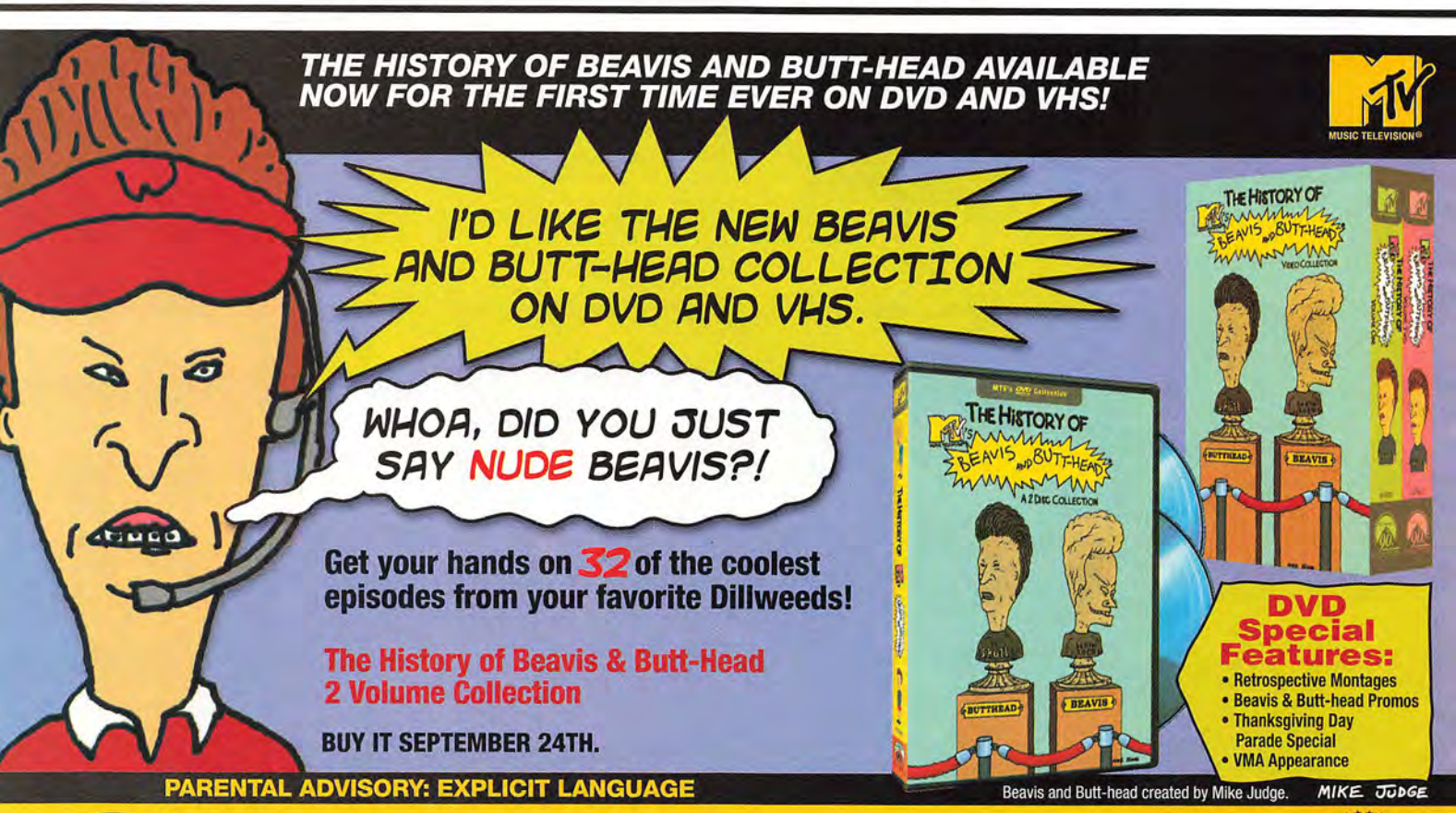
In the lengthy history of Elvis rip-offs, this collection of live radio performances from 1954 to 1956 lowers the bar. Several songs have new bass and acoustic guitar parts, duplicating originals ruined by tape hiss. The effect is as if Jackie Collins were hired to rewrite *The Canterbury Tales*.

THE THREE O'CLOCK

ARRIVE WITHOUT TRAVELLING/ EVER AFTER ✪

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

This reissue of the second and third albums by Los Angeles's '80s paisley-pop mainstays the Three O'Clock is distinctive in just one way — it features the mewling whine of bassist Michael Quercio. It beggars belief that a full-grown man's voice could be so pitifully fey.



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Paramount 90TH ANNIVERSARY A VIACOM COMPANY

EVERY ORIGINAL CD REVIEWED

AC/DC

AC/DC's unswerving devotion to primitive raunch made them one of metal's most enduring bands. Beginning in 1973 on the tough Australian bar circuit, 18-year-old guitarist Angus Young dressed as a schoolboy to disarm drunken customers, and created an image he was stuck with for the next three decades. No frills, no fuss and no compromises, they've inspired two generations of hard-rock bands, from Def Leppard to Guns N' Roses to Nickelback — none of whom was ever as pure.
By Carlo Twist

Rampant groupie sex and bestiality (with a goat, in fact) were all in a day's work for the late Bon Scott.

BLENDER APPROVED

IF YOU WANT BLOOD YOU'VE GOT IT *ATLANTIC, 1978*
★★★★★

They were always a mighty live act, and this is the sound of AC/DC in Europe just prior to 1979's U.S. breakthrough. The audience's hysteria regularly cuts through the amps, as they howl along to singer Bon Scott's tale of sexually transmitted disease ("The Jack") and punctuate guitarist Angus Young's staccato riffing on "Whole Lotta Rosie." Imagine a punk-rock Chuck Berry played at nosebleed volume.
Standout tracks: "Riff Raff," "Whole Lotta Rosie," "Let There Be Rock"

HIGHWAY TO HELL *ATLANTIC, 1979*
★★★★★

Producer "Mutt" Lange sanded off a few of AC/DC's rougher edges and bolted the steam-hammer riffs and Scott's foul wit to pop-friendly choruses. The title cut hinted at the singer's perilous hedonism while making disaster sound like the best fun in the world. AC/DC's message was simple: Get wasted, have sex with dangerous women, repeat.
Standout tracks: "Highway to Hell," "Touch Too Much," "Shot Down in Flames"

BACK IN BLACK *ATLANTIC, 1980*
★★★★★

Bon Scott's death — from alcohol poisoning — in February 1980 could have snuffed out AC/DC. Instead, they recruited Brian Johnson, a former car salesman who had sung with the British band Geordie. "Blessed" with a similar vocal style, Johnson was a natural fit, and *Back in Black* delivered the same killer riffs/killer chorus combos as its predecessor, while saluting Scott with the touchingly crass "Have a Drink on Me." At 19 million sold, it's the metal album even your grandma owns.
Standout tracks: "You Shook Me All Night Long," "Back in Black"

GREAT

LET THERE BE ROCK *ATCO, 1977*
★★★★

AC/DC cranked up the volume and intensity, making this weightier than their earlier albums. Their newly acquired metalness suited the songs: Scott outlined his delinquent past in "Problem Child" and gave a mock-Biblical slant to his retelling of the birth of rock on the title track. Current CD versions omit "Crabsody in Blue," another of Scott's songs about venereal disease — an ailment he contracted with comic regularity on tour. Hey, that stings!
Standout tracks: "Bad Boy Boogie," "Problem Child," "Let There Be Rock"

POWERAGE *ATLANTIC, 1978*
★★★★

Out went bassist Mark Evans and in came his replacement: blond-haired, singlet-wearing Brit Cliff Williams. *Powerage* is reportedly Keith Richards's favorite AC/DC album, and the almost funky leadoff track, "Rock N' Roll Damnation," wouldn't sound out of place on *Exile on Main Street*. Promiscuous women figured prominently, but as "Kicked in the Teeth" and "Up to My Neck in You" attested, Scott's patience with women appeared to be running out. AC/DC's lost gem.
Standout tracks: "Rock N' Roll Damnation," "Sin City," "Up to My Neck in You"

Brian Johnson: "Can I walk you home from school, Angus?"

AC/DC in 1978, from left: Malcolm Young, Phil Rudd, Bon Scott, Angus Young and Cliff Williams

From left: Robert Ellis/Repfoto; LFI

CHECK IT OUT

HIGH VOLTAGE *ATCO, 1976*
✪✪✪

A patchy combination of AC/DC's 1975 Australian debut, *High Voltage*, and second album, 1976's *T.N.T.*, which was never released in the U.S. "Live Wire" and "T.N.T." made for a spectacularly noisy calling card, while "The Jack," Scott's first VD ode, proved uneasy listening for his wife, Irene, who after hearing the album promptly divorced him.
Standout tracks: "Live Wire," "T.N.T."

DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP *ATLANTIC, 1981*
✪✪✪

A sleazy collection of heavy R&B. The sinister title cut offered Scott as a hit man–cum–gigolo for spurned women, and "Big Balls" piled on his least subtle innuendo. But it wasn't all sex, violence and testicles: "Ride On" described the loneliness of life on the road, and Scott acknowledged his lost youth on "Ain't No Fun (Waiting 'Round to Be a Millionaire)" — a brief respite before he got back to the important stuff: more sex and violence.
Standout tracks: "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap," "Ride On"

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK *ATLANTIC, 1981*
✪✪✪

AC/DC had hardly stopped for a breath since Bon Scott's sudden death and the subsequent recording of *Back in Black*, their best-selling album. On *For Those About to Rock*, it started to show. This follow-up managed a couple of (almost) classics: the overblown title track and "Let's Get It Up," more sexual hijinks, proving that Brian Johnson could match Bon Scott for comedy lewdness ("Cruisin' on the seven seas/A pirate of my lovin' needs").
Standout tracks: "For Those About to Rock (We Salute You)," "Let's Get It Up"

BE CAREFUL

THE RAZORS EDGE *ATCO, 1990*
✪✪✪

Hurt by critics' claims that they'd failed to match *Back in Black*, AC/DC reclaimed the old spirit on their first album of the '90s. Aerosmith producer Bruce Fairbain applied gloss, but the filthy blues template remained as tarnished as ever. Their most buoyant record in some time, and "Thunderstruck" was as anthemic as anything from Scott's golden age.
Standout tracks: "Thunderstruck," "Fire Your Guns"

LIVE *ATCO, 1992*
✪✪✪

Lacking *If You Want Blood*'s raw aggression, this is still a good-humored document of AC/DC live in the '90s. Johnson sounds as if he's about to cough up a lung, but the machinelike precision of the rhythm section and Angus Young's stuttering guitar are still peerless.
Standout tracks: "Thunderstruck," Shoot to Thrill," "You Shook Me All Night Long"

BALLBREAKER *EAST/WEST, 1995*
✪✪✪

With a cleaned-up Phil Rudd back on drums and AC/DC maniac Rick Rubin producing, this was a sudden return to form. "Hard as a Rock" — illustrated on tour by classy footage of, er, copulating farm animals — boasted their most contagious riff in ages.
Standout tracks: "Hard as a Rock," "Hail Caesar"

FLICK OF THE SWITCH *ATLANTIC, 1983*
✪✪

AC/DC responded to the early-'80s hair-metal trend by ditching producer "Mutt" Lange and returning to the raw blues of their early days. The experiment was only partly successful. Meanwhile, Rudd bailed out: Overindulgence on tour resulted in hallucinations and a fistfight with guitarist Malcolm Young.
Standout track: "Nervous Shakedown"

FOR FANS ONLY

BLOW UP YOUR VIDEO *ATLANTIC, 1988*
✪✪

On their best-selling album since *For Those About to Rock*, AC/DC recruited original producers Harry Vanda and George Young (Angus and Malcolm's brother). "Heatseeker," their best song in years, was a gloriously silly romp with a trepanning guitar riff. AC/DC also got involved in world affairs: U.S. troops played "Highway to Hell" to blast Panama's dictator, Manuel Noriega, out of his compound.
Standout track: "Heatseeker"

STIFF UPPER LIP *EAST/WEST, 2000*
✪✪

AC/DC began the twenty-first century playing the biggest venues of their career and enjoying a critical reevaluation. *Stiff Upper Lip* didn't quite match former glories, but it gave the band an excuse for a sold-out world tour, on which Phil Rudd achieved the difficult feat of smoking a cigarette while drumming.
Standout tracks: "Stiff Upper Lip," "Safe in New York City"

FLY ON THE WALL *ATLANTIC, 1985*
✪

A poor debut for Rudd's replacement, English journeyman drummer Simon Wright. "Danger" and "Stand Up" plodded laboriously, with only "Shake Your Foundations" ("Ay-ay-ay, shake yer foundayshuns") silly and endearing enough to compensate. AC/DC sounded spent.
Standout track: "Shake Your Foundations"

WHO MADE WHO *ATLANTIC, 1986*
✪

Almost a compilation, but not quite. *Who Made Who* featured three new songs commissioned for the Stephen King movie *Maximum Overdrive*, plus a handful of older, post–Bon Scott numbers. The album was reassuringly thuggish, though it relied on a brace of *Back in Black*–era tracks to up the quality.
Standout track: "Who Made Who"

FURTHER LISTENING

GEORDIE
A BAND FROM GEORDIELAND
REPERTOIRE, 1996
✪✪
Catchall compilation of Brian Johnson's old band. Gentler than AC/DC, with the emphasis on boozy, good-time rock & roll — epitomized by the British hit "All Because of You."

FURTHER VIEWING

AC/DC STIFF UPPER LIP LIVE
WARNER MUSIC VIDEO & DVD, 2001
✪✪✪✪
Concert film commemorating 2000's world jaunt. Marvel at a 45-year-old man in a schoolboy's uniform and a singer who sounds as though he's swallowed broken glass.

FURTHER READING

HIGHWAY TO HELL
THE LIFE & TIMES OF AC/DC LEGEND BON SCOTT
VERSE CHORUS PRESS, 2001
✪✪✪✪
A raucous biography proving that casual delinquency, rampant groupie sex and bestiality (with a goat, in fact) were all in a day's work for the late Bon Scott.

Black Thought of the Roots: "I wanna take you higher!" Crowd: "We already are, dude."

Smokin' — Literally!

R&B's high-IQ set proves smart people can party, too. Even wacky Lauryn Hill!

YOU'VE GOT TO be either brave or crazy to bring an acoustic guitar to a block party. **LAURYN HILL** seems more the latter halfway through this third date of the Smokin' Grooves tour, as she ambles onstage in full hushed-folkie mode with only an acoustic six-string.

There are many groovin' smokers at the Coors Amphitheatre in Chula Vista, California, just outside San Diego, and copious clouds of herb smoke are gathering over the sun-splashed seats, pushed toward the stage by an afternoon ocean breeze. The midsummer jam seems the wrong setting for ex-Fugee Hill, who recently declared her moral objection to pop pleasure and her retirement from being an entertainer on *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0*, a preachy, dry follow-up to *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, her 8 million–selling hip-hop masterpiece from 1998.

The party people in the crowd may be aware that Hill was wracked by the end of her relationship with Rohan Marley, and they may have seen her weep on *Unplugged* while singing these ascetic new tracks. But they're not in the mood to be lectured. At the start of her half-hour set, the crowd's chatter nearly drowns Hill out. Undaunted, she stares down the audience.

Hill barely speaks between songs — "Can y'all hear me?" and "Goodbye" are all she says throughout — but eventually, a strange thing happens: Serious prevails over stoned. The buzz quiets as Hill slowly pulls everybody in, and bandannas and ball caps alike nod in respect as she sings "Mr. International" and "Oh Jerusalem." Only halfway through the show, the highlight has arrived: a fearless tightrope act pulled off as though it were no biggie.

With the Fugees, Hill was part of the first Smokin' Grooves tour in 1996. For three years, the show gathered alternative rappers and proved hip-hop could hit the road without leaving death and destruction in its wake. On its first trek since 1998, Smokin' Grooves offers a lineup of R&B's progressive, high-IQ

SMOKIN' GROOVES

COORS AMPHITHEATRE CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA

JULY 20, 2002

★★★★

Jurassic 5 all fail to look in the same direction.

OutKast's Dre 3000: His Afro is no match for the power of gravity.

set, and aims to prove a point: that smart people can throw a party, too. Even a folkie with a guitar.

Late in the afternoon, the show begins with a positivity-drenched performance by paunchy **CEE-LO** of the Goodie Mob, the first of several Dirty South rappers on the bill. The crowd, still beginning to filter in, starts to pay attention to **TRUTH HURTS**, a neosoul singer on Dr. Dre's label, though possibly less for her fair mix of singing and rapping than for the leg she flashes beneath a hot-blue miniskirt.

Smokin' Grooves pretends gangsta never happened, so Los Angeles's **JURASSIC 5**, who evoke early rap's spirit of team play and innocent good times, are a natural fit. They talk up their new album and prove themselves friendly — to a fault. J5 lack that crucial hip-hop DNA, the primal chromosome that triggers a competitive impulse. Making nice-nice-nice, none of the four rappers ever rocks the mic hard enough to embarrass the other three. They even stage a little battle between their two DJs, Nu-Mark and Cut Chemist, which comes off more like a lovefest than a grudge match. The audience, finally, begins to roar.

THE ROOTS follow Hill, coming onstage as a yellow moon rises. Drummer ?uestlove wears a crowd-pleasing vintage San Diego Padres jersey, symbolizing the Philly band's eagerness to give what the crowd wants: a stomp. With five musicians in their live band, the Roots play a pair of new songs from their upcoming album, *Phrenology*: "Thought at Work," a tribute to old-school rappers, and "The Seed," built around an over-the-top metaphor: A man who cheats on his wife somehow symbolizes black musicians who play rock music. "I push my seed in her bush for life; I'm gonna make it 'cause I'm pushing it right," sings Cody Chestnutt, a 32-year-old soul extrovert from Atlanta. "If Mary drops my baby girl tonight, I would name her rock & roll." Half-deep, half-mad, it's a perfect Roots moment.

"Stank you, stank you very much," rapper Big Boi bellows as **OUTKAST** close the five-hour show. Big Boi's flashier partner, Dre 3000, has a well-deserved reputation as the peacock of hip-hop, but tonight he has subverted expectations, decking himself out in an ensemble of low-key jeans and a khaki-colored army jacket.

Lauryn Hill, bicycle racing enthusiast

Eventually a strange thing happens: Serious prevails over stoned.

OutKast's dancers have it all figured out. Four chunky guys, they know that even with the California sun long gone, the stage still gets hot, so they do their nifty steps to "So Fresh, So Clean," one of the hits from 2000's great *Stankonia*, while sitting in chairs. They're the only people still in their seats.

OutKast shows often turn into parties, and when a black-and-white American flag unravels behind the stage, they launch into "B.O.B.," their adrenaline-overdose song about the *last* Persian Gulf war. Two cannons onstage shoot glitter into the audience, adding one more twist on the ordinary — OutKast play an antiwar song while the hillside they face looks like an exploding battlefield.

On that hillside, Chicano low-riders, dreadlocked hip-hop progressives and rave girls pump thousands of fists in the air, cheering the promise of Smokin' Grooves: to turn a brawl into a block party, to prove that brainy consciousness can rock the house. By cannon fire, mic, turntable or even acoustic guitar. *RJ SMITH*

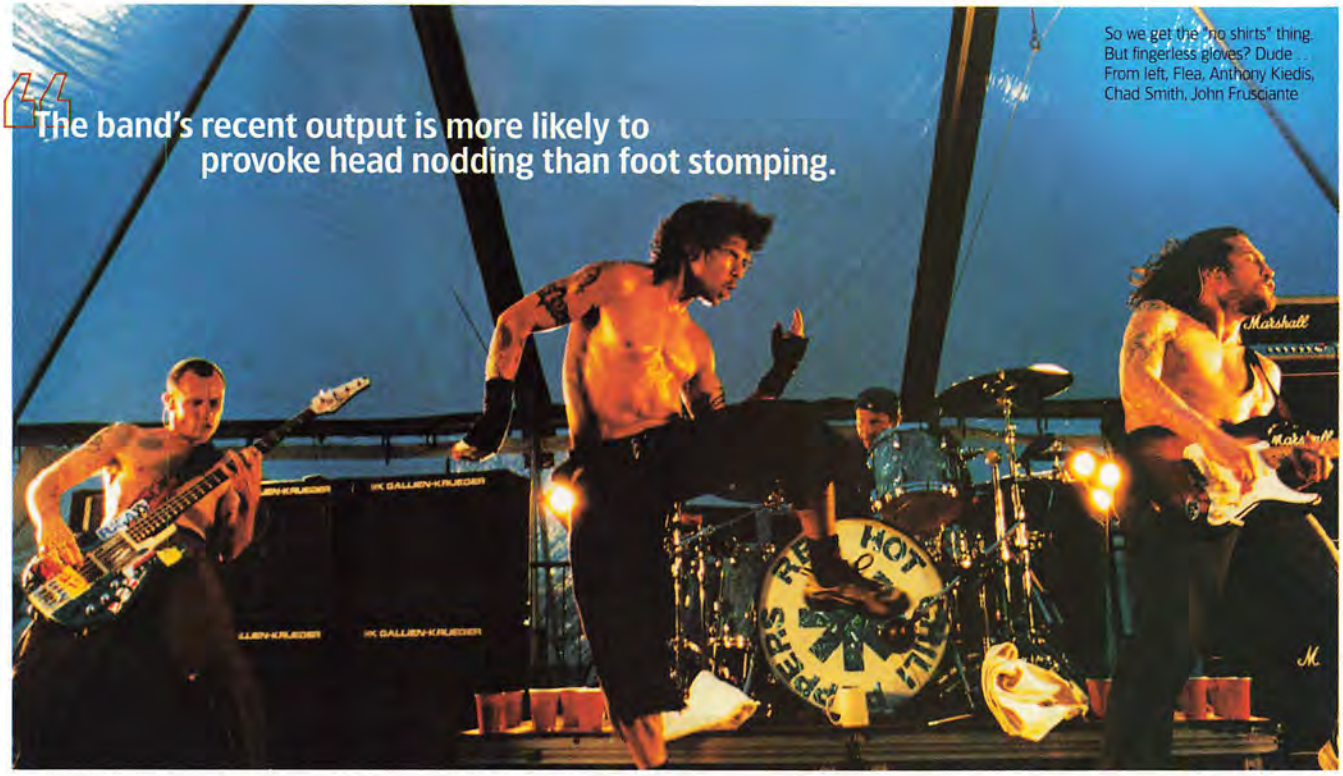
Blender Asks, How'd You Like the Show?

ROBERT HENDERSON
21, *STUDENT*
ROB WILLIAMS
22, *STUDENT*
Henderson: "The Roots really set it off. They hit me the whole show. I like real music. I'm not a big fan of commercial rap." **Williams:** "I didn't see Jurassic 5. We were up in the food court."

MARK STREETER
20, *STUDENT*
LAUREN MISKIN
18, *STUDENT*
Streeter: "Lauren and I just met. When I was trying to jump the banister I looked back and saw this beautiful girl, and I was like, 'Wow!' There's not too much romance at this show. It's more playa stuff."

HAZEL SMITH
38, *TELECOMMUNICATIONS MANAGER*
"Lauryn Hill has gotten folky and poetic. Smokin' Grooves is a mixture of everything, of the old and the new. Nice fusion."
JONAH WEINER

Opposite page, clockwise from top: Ted Soqui; Jen Lowery/London Features; Ted Soqui. This page, from top: Ted Soqui; Sara Jaye Weiss (3)



So we get the "no shirts" thing. But fingerless gloves? Dude... From left, Flea, Anthony Kiedis, Chad Smith, John Frusciante

> The band's recent output is more likely to provoke head nodding than foot stomping.

Pep Rally

At a special Ellis Island concert for 9/11 victims, the Red Hot Chili Peppers fight the rain and win

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

ELLIS ISLAND, NEW YORK

JULY 9, 2002

✪✪✪

"I DON'T WANT anybody to take their clothes off," Flea instructs the audience three songs into the Red Hot Chili Peppers' first American show of 2002. "It wouldn't be proper. It would be like shitting in Uncle Sam's birthday cake."

The nudity-loving bassist has a point. The tidy grounds of Ellis Island, immigration landing point for millions of poor, huddled masses, do not encourage flesh baring. At the moment, only three people are shirtless — singer Anthony Kiedis, Flea and guitarist John Frusciante — though the crowd's modesty is less patriotic respect than simple self-preservation. While lining up near the site of the former World Trade Center for a choppy, one-hour ferry ride to Ellis Island, fans were drenched by a summer rainstorm of Biblical proportions, which then slowed to a drizzle.

This special outdoor show, to mark the release of *By the Way*, the quartet's eighth album, was planned not as an endurance test but as a "pep rally" for the families of September 11 victims. While the audience of 1,000 is undoubtedly grateful, its gratitude doesn't immediately translate into roaring enthusiasm.

The weather's partly to blame — though so is the set list, largely new tracks such as "I Could Die for You" and the acoustic guitar–driven "Venice Queen." With the exception of the opener, the current single "By the Way," the new tracks are unfamiliar and, like much of the band's recent midtempo output, more likely to provoke head nodding than foot stomping.

Sure, it's a rare thrill to stand close enough to see every flexing muscle on Flea and Kiedis's physiques, or every scar on ex-junkie Frusciante's forearms. Given the soggy conditions, though, it might have been wiser to depart from the plan and offer up more older tracks alongside "Scar Tissue" (from 1999's *Californication*), which features Frusciante's first great solo of the evening, and a version of "Californication" notable mostly for Kiedis's wincingly flat vocals.

When, just before the end of the Peppers' main set, the singer tells Flea, "The great thing about playing on an island is that we could start playing Bon Jovi covers and they'd still have to stay," you can't help but feel that a couple of familiar selections from the Jon Bon Jovi–Richie Sambora songbook would go down just fine.

Instead, the Chili Peppers blast into the old-school rap-rocking of "Me and My Friends," finally achieving a sense of occasion as the crowd begins to gyrate with the band's energy. The momentum continues after a short break as the foursome returns with headstands (Flea) and a brief drum solo (Chad Smith), then play their breakthrough ballad, 1991's "Under the Bridge."

Finally, the Peppers snatch victory from the jaws of defeat with a raucous run through "The Power of Equality" that leaves these particular masses not just un-huddled but wearing fewer clothes than when they arrived. Shit-filled birthday cake or not, Uncle Sam would undoubtedly approve. *CLARK COLLIS*

Kiedis regrets the pre-gig strip poker game.

George Tickel (2)

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Sex, Lies and Videotape

Home-style porno! A gruesome murder! It's the creepiest movie of the year. By Ted Lambert

AUTO FOCUS

DIRECTED BY Paul Schrader

STARRING Greg Kinnear, Willem Dafoe, Rita Wilson

>> WHO MURDERED Bob Crane? The star of *Hogan's Heroes*, the hit 1960s sitcom set in a World War II P.O.W. camp, was 49 in 1978 when someone bashed his skull in with a video-camera tripod. That might have seemed an apt weapon: The sex-obsessed Crane spent his final years videotaping hundreds of conquests.

Crane's bizarre life and unsolved death have inspired the finest creep-out movie of the year. *Auto Focus* doesn't solve his murder, but it's an astonishing portrait, a slo-mo train wreck that makes viewers roar with laughter and gape in shock. Director Paul Schrader, who wrote the equally tawdry, hypermasculine *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*, finds offbeat humor in the goofy affability of Crane (Greg Kinnear) and pal John "Carpy" Carpenter (Willem Dafoe).

Sex and pornography, like most addictions, have a way of sneaking up on a guy. At first, Crane's a smart-alecky, churchgoing family man who dreams of being the next Jack Lemmon. When his wife (Rita Wilson) discovers a stack of porno mags in the garage, he shrugs it off: "I'm a photo nut." But then he meets Carpy, who leads him to strip joints and videotape. Soon, they're taping trysts every night.

It's all good, dirty fun until the two develop an obsession. Both actors are perfectly cast: Dafoe's Carpy is an icky errand boy, procuring females for his famous buddy and feasting on the leftovers, while Kinnear's smarmy, clean-cut puritan gets his boxers in a twist when he sees footage of Carpy's hand on his ass. "Bob — it was an orgy," mutters the sheepish Dafoe.

Auto Focus is a funny, frightening portrait of how one star used his fame to destroy his life. Warning: this movie may squelch any desires to do the nasty for a while. And if it doesn't, be sure to check the room for hidden cameras first.

CANCELED!

Whatever happened to our favorite troubled TV stars?

GEORGE REEVES
Adventures of Superman. Shoots himself to death at his own party, 1959.

ANISSA JONES
Family Affair (Buffy). Fatal overdose, 1976.

FREDDIE PRINZE
Chico and the Man. Shoots himself to death, 1977.

PEE-WEE HERMAN
Pee-Wee's Playhouse. Arrested for masturbating in theater, 1991.

TODD BRIDGES
Diff'rent Strokes. Arrested for ramming friend's car, 1997.

DANA PLATO
Diff'rent Strokes. Arrested in video-store robbery, 1991, and prescription forgery, 1992. Fatal overdose, 1999.

PHIL HARTMAN
Saturday Night Live. Murdered by wife, 1999.

ROBERT BLAKE
Our Gang, Baretta. Arrested in shooting death of wife, 2001.

Dana Plato, feeling no pain in 1994

Pacha/Corbis (Plato)

KNOCKAROUND GUYS

DIRECTED BY Brian Koppelman, David Levien

STARRING Barry Pepper, Vin Diesel, Seth Green, John Malkovich, Dennis Hopper

CALL 'EM DUMBFELLAS. Four young Brooklyn mopes just wanna join the "family," so Barry Pepper persuades his dad the Don (Dennis Hopper) to let him deliver $500,000 from the Pacific Northwest, which his dopey pilot pal (Seth Green) misplaces in a tough Montana town. Oops. But by then, the movie's already lost its direction, too — is this a comedy, a buddy movie or a heist thriller? And why is John Malkovich, as a Brooklyn thug, speaking in that bizarre Czech (we're guessing here) accent? Who knows? Who cares? These *Guys* are way too tedious for such questions.

ROGER DODGER

DIRECTED BY Dylan Kidd

STARRING Campbell Scott, Jesse Eisenberg, Isabella Rossellini, Jennifer Beals, Elizabeth Berkley

FROM THE MEN Behaving Badly file: A womanizing adman (Scott) takes a surprise visitor, his precocious teenage nephew (Eisenberg), on a dusk-to-dawn tour of Manhattan — from clubs to parties to a (literally) underground sex club — for an education in women's mysterious ways. As dawn arrives, the kid learns much more than he wants to, and his uncle realizes he's growing weary of the reptile's life. Scott shines as an intelligent, emotionally stunted yuppie, and the young Eisenberg is shy and endearing. And the lovely Beals and Berkley are bar pickups from heaven.

Ashley Maile/allaction.co.uk (Moby)

Blender Approved

The pick of recent movies

SIMONE

Al Pacino gets big laughs as he controls the world's hottest actress. (So what if she's a computer program? She's a babe!)

SIGNS

They see space people! Crop circles (and an unusually freaked-out Mel Gibson) make for an eerie close encounter.

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?

MOBY

Electronica superstar-pioneer-nabob; latest album is *18*

"*Lilo and Stitch.* Some friends dragged me to see it, and the humor is very sophisticated. It's like *Monsters Inc.*, but a little quirkier. I love it so much, I've seen it three times."

AND THE REST . . .

DON'T MISS

MOONLIGHT MILE

DIRECTED BY Brad Silberling
STARRING Dustin Hoffman, Susan Sarandon, Jake Gyllenhaal, Holly Hunter
THE PITCH A young guy moves in with his murdered fiancée's parents, and finds himself falling for another girl.
THE VERDICT A sincere, darkly comic tear-jerker with a great early-'70s soundtrack (Dylan, the Stones, Gary Glitter). Gyllenhaal holds his own among Hoffman and other masters. Bring a date — and some tissues.

BLOODY SUNDAY

DIRECTED BY Paul Greengrass
STARRING James Nesbitt, Tim Pigott-Smith
THE PITCH A terrifying cinema verité–style reenactment of January 30, 1972, when British troops shot 13 civil-rights demonstrators to death in Derry, Northern Ireland.
THE VERDICT As real as drama gets. Skillful, stylish filmmaking will make audiences gasp. And U2's 20-year-old title song, playing over the closing credits, never sounded so chilling.

DON'T RUSH

WELCOME TO COLLINWOOD

DIRECTED BY Joe and Anthony Russo
STARRING Sam Rockwell, William H. Macy, Luis Guzman, George Clooney
THE PITCH A comic fairy tale about moronic thieves in a rundown city who overhear talk of the perfect job — and try to steal it.
THE VERDICT A bizarre comedy mannered like a 1930s movie, where the cops know every bum's name (and vice versa), but no one gets funny lines. Clooney's wheelchair-bound cameo seems like an afterthought.

THE FOUR FEATHERS

DIRECTED BY Shekhar Kapur
STARRING Heath Ledger, Wes Bentley, Kate Hudson, Djimon Hounsou
THE PITCH A British officer in 1898 Sudan resigns before the battle, and his loved ones condemn his cowardice. Surprise — he's on a heroic secret mission!
THE VERDICT The latest (but not the best) remake of a film shot as early as 1915. Sadly, Ledger is not a hero for the ages — at least not for the ages older than 16.

DON'T BOTHER

THE MAN FROM ELYSIAN FIELDS

DIRECTED BY George Hickenlooper
STARRING Andy Garcia, Mick Jagger, Anjelica Huston, James Coburn, Michael Des Barres
THE PITCH Man writes bad novels. Man can't support family. Man becomes male escort under high-end pimp (Jagger). Man becomes boy-toy to wife of idolized author.
THE VERDICT A wacky, tacky, absurd and moralistic drama. Jagger's craggy, forlorn dandy is strangely riveting, but not enough.

NAQOYQATSI

DIRECTED BY Godfrey Reggio
STARRING Nobody, actually
THE PITCH Third in a trilogy of non-narrative, wordless visual mosaics set to Philip Glass's avant-garde "*boodly-boodly*" score. Current theme: technology and war.
THE VERDICT *Koyaanisqatsi* was pretty trippy. Sequel *Powaqqatsi* was less of the same. But number three, crammed with tired digital effects (like flashing binary code), looks like a 90-minute AT&T commercial.

Pioneer skater Jay Adams evades evil truancy officers.

Reservoir Dogs

How L.A.'s first skate rats built a new culture from scratches, gashes and fractures. By Clark Collis

DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS

DIRECTED BY
Stacy Peralta

NARRATED BY
Sean Penn

STARRING
Tony Alva, Jay Adams, Stacy Peralta

COLUMBIA/TRI-STAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪✪✪

>> IN THE EARLY '70s, the Pacific Ocean Park Pier just north of Los Angeles was, by common agreement, one of the most dangerous places in the world to surf. The problem lay partly with the abandoned park's abundance of rotting wooden pylons and fallen roller-coaster tracks.

But an equally grave danger came from the local Zephyr Surf Team, a teenage gang who showered visitors with rocks and concrete. "The best thing I ever saw was someone paddle out with [a stranger's] carburetor on top of his surfboard," one Zephyr grad recalls in *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, a brilliant documentary about skate punks in Dogtown, a ratty Santa Monica 'hood. "He goes, 'Hey, does this belong to you?' and drops it in the water."

The Zephyrs' stylish hard-assery also defined their skateboarding spin-off, the Z-Boys, a group of teens from the wrong side of Wilshire Boulevard who would revolutionize skateboarding with a flamboyant approach combining surf moves with the aerial tricks they honed by breaking into the drained backyard swimming pools of local mansions.

Still revered by pro skater Tony Hawk and hardcore hero Henry Rollins — both interviewed by director and former Z-Boy Stacy Peralta — some of the team would finesse their newfound fame into financial reward (and, in one case, a *Charlie's Angels* cameo). Others, like Jay Adams, the most gifted Z-Boy, would embark on a drug-fueled "20-year summer vacation."

Peralta tells the bittersweet tale of his past in a style evoking his subjects, melding the ramshackle (narrator Sean Penn at one point actually clears his throat) with the sophisticated (flashy editing and a kick-ass classic-rock soundtrack). The result is this year's best documentary, a suitably in-your-face tribute to the influential teens who were, as one interviewee gleefully states, "more like a street gang than a skate team."

Blade II: Wesley Snipes always stunned the guys in his afternoon Jazzfunkacize class.

BLADE II

NEW LINE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪

Half-human. Half-vampire. All Wesley Snipes. The superhero again overcomes these three disadvantages to battle evil and conquer the box office. The second time around, the baddies are a (literally) jaw-dropping band of supervamps. Will Snipes and buddy Kris Kristofferson prevail? It's probably worth at least a small wager — but the plot's predictability is offset by stylish direction from Guillermo Del Toro, who provides commentary on this two-disc set.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

WARNER HOME VIDEO

✪

Following a terrorist attack that kills his wife and child, Arnold Schwarzenegger heads south to assassinate the Wolf, a Colombian rebel leader, using the assorted antiterrorism skills he's picked up as a . . . fireman. What ensues on this DVD, featuring deleted scenes and commentary by director Andrew Davis, is offensive not so much because of September 11 (which delayed the film's big-screen release by six months) but because it just plain sucks.

DEUCES WILD

MGM/UA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪

Retelling *West Side Story* by substituting all the song-and-dance routines with brutal beatings is not that bad an idea — but shooting a script so riddled with clichés it often resembles a *Naked Gun*–style spoof is. *Deuces Wild* makes other mistakes for good measure, like hiring the less-famous half of the *Sopranos* crew, which merely reminds us how much we'd rather be watching the HBO series instead. And *Deuce*'s principal casting of Stephen Dorff and Frankie Muniz is beyond surreal. *Fuhgeddaboutit?* If only it were that easy.

Blender Approved

The pick of recent DVDs

PULP FICTION

BUENA VISTA HOME VIDEO

Quentin Tarantino's masterpiece finds two philosophical assassins getting lost in L.A., guided by their guns, syringes and smart-ass remarks.

THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS

CRITERION

A fading family of child geniuses reunites to witness the return of their long-lost dad. Includes deleted scenes.

The Kobal Collection (Pulp Fiction)

FRAILTY

TRIMARK HOME VIDEO

✪✪✪✪

Bill Paxton is a single dad who informs his two kids that they must start killing demons in the name of God. Cool, huh? Except the "demons" look just like people, leading Paxton's eldest son to believe a) that they actually *are* just people and b) that Pa has gone batshit crazy. Paxton's directorial debut didn't make much of a mark at the box office, but it's destined to be remembered as one of the great creep-outs of our times. The DVD includes commentary.

IN THE BEDROOM

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪✪

Todd Field's terrific film confidently straddles soap opera, suspense and gothic horror, a feat that deserves every one of its five Oscar nominations. Sissy Spacek and Tom Wilkinson shine as the parents of a kid whose affair with single mom Marisa Tomei kick-starts the film's plot. Only the scummiest critic would reveal more, although you should know that *Bedroom* is undoubtedly one of the Top 10 worst date-DVDs of all time.

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VAN WILDER

ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪

While this gross-out tale of a party-hearty college slacker may be comparable in some ways to *National Lampoon's Animal House* (its name, and its cameo from *House* alumnus Tim Matheson), quality is not one of them. True, lead Ryan Reynolds is fairly agreeable, but what the film really needs is an Adam Sandler. Or a young Chevy Chase. Or the occasional joke that doesn't involve dog semen–filled chocolate éclairs.

QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

WARNER HOME VIDEO

✪

In the tradition of not speaking ill of the dead, it is true that

Queen of the Damned: Aaliyah ponders her character's motivation.

Aaliyah's turn as an ancient bloodsucker is by far the best thing about this sequel to *Interview With the Vampire*. But the same would also have been true of a full-frontal nude cameo by Larry King. *Queen of the Damned* is dismal from beginning to end, and Stuart Townsend's central performance is so atrocious you may actually go blind watching it — or at least wish you would.

RESERVOIR DOGS

ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪✪✪

Can it really be 10 years since Quentin Tarantino introduced us to Messrs. White, Pink, Blonde and Orange (all commemorated with their own editions of this anniversary release)? And can there really have been so few films since that have approached the quality of this ultimate heist-gone-wrong flick? Yes and yes, but cheer yourself up with this DVD's many extras, not least QT recalling how he disposed of troublesome actor Lawrence Tierney: "Fuck you, you fat fuck, you're fucking fired — take your fat fucking ass off my fucking set."

SHOWTIME

WARNER HOME VIDEO

✪✪

It's not hard to imagine the pitch: "So Bobby De Niro's this Dirty Harry–type cop who's forced to appear on a reality TV show with loudmouth partner Eddie Murphy: It's *Beverly Hills Cop* meets *Midnight Run*!" Sadly, the lazily written result is more like *Beverly Hills Cop III* meets a film even worse than *Beverly Hills Cop III*. Director Tom Dey provides commentary, but few apologies.

MUSIC DVDS BY STEVE JACKSON

SCRATCH

PALM PICTURES

✪✪✪✪

The ulti- (*wikki-wikki*) ulti- (*wikki-waaaaah*) ultimate documentary on the hip-hop vinyl itch and the DJs who scratch it — a guided tour to every way a party has ever been rocked by two turntables, with or without a microphone. Lovingly assembled from interviews with people in baseball caps, from scratch inventor Grand Wizard Theodore to modern mixmaster DJ Shadow, it also has astounding footage of live turntable battles and a cool, funny vibe. The DVD version has hours of extra goodies, including tutorials from West Coast wunderkinds Z-Trip and Qbert. (*Skibbadedip!*)

KYLIE MINOGUE: LIVE IN SYDNEY

MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

✪✪✪

With her neat choreography, ornate sets and skimpy costumes, the Aussie sexpot could have called this the Brunette Ambition Tour. It's good, campy fun, revisiting most of her hits, from "I Should Be So Lucky" (recast as a torch song!) to the pumping "Can't Get You Out of My Head."

LIGHTNING BOLT: POWER OF SALAD

LOAD

✪✪✪

A gleeful, sugar-crazed documentary following Rhode Island's power-violence duo Lightning Bolt on tour — they play in the middle of the crowd, and *Salad* captures the mosh pit's energy. Includes a deranged animated video for "St. Jacques."

TODD RUNDGREN: LIVE IN JAPAN

IMAGE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪

This 1990 set shows Rundgren's voice in top form — he sounds like a geeky, white Al Green in places — and draws on 20 years of solo non-hits (plus a cocktail-bar "Hello It's Me"). Too bad the fun gets spoiled by the tour's soulless, mulleted backing musicians and ugly, intrusive lighting.

ALANIS MORISSETTE: MUSIC IN HIGH PLACES

IMAGE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪

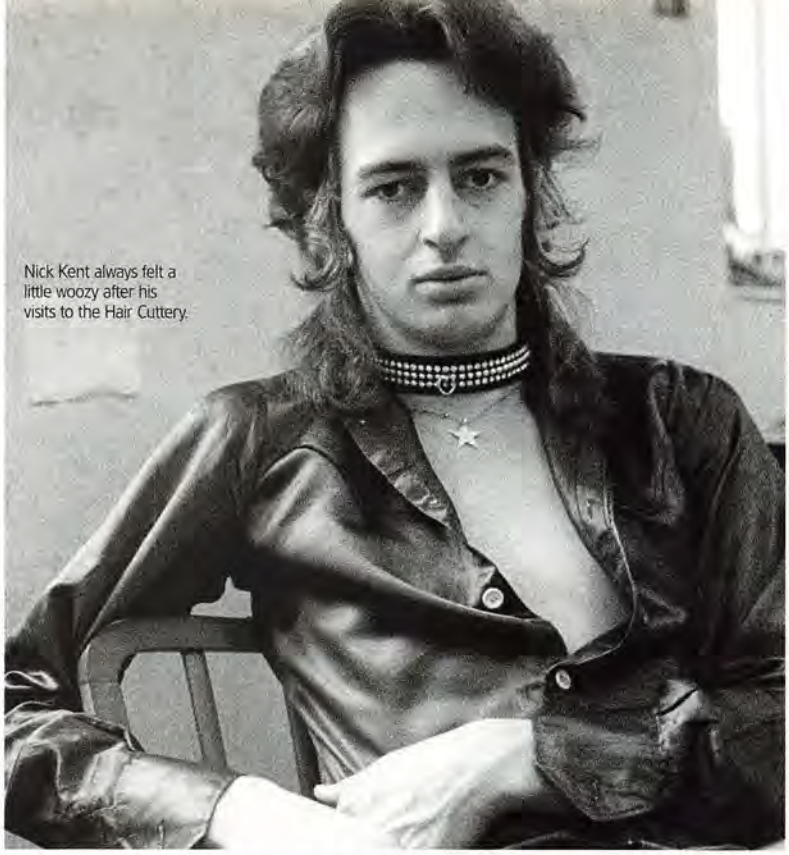
Morissette explores her spiritual side in the caves and cliffs of Navajo country, playing acoustic versions of her hits and hanging out at the locals' drum circles. The landscapes are ravishingly desolate; the performances, a little overserious.

HEROES OF LATIN HIP-HOP

CULT/MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

✪✪

These intermittently interesting interviews with faded stars Cypress Hill, Mellow Man Ace and an utterly stoned Kid Frost are delivered in long, stultifying, unedited chunks. Nearly the only music is in the bonus sections: live, badly filmed footage of Cypress, and Frost lip-syncing some new songs.



Nick Kent always felt a little woozy after his visits to the Hair Cuttery.

Pretty Vacant

Nick Kent walks on the wild side with Keef, Sid and Eminem — and returns a hero! By David Quantick

THE DARK STUFF

SELECTED WRITINGS ON ROCK MUSIC

By Nick Kent

DA CAPO PRESS, $17.50

★★★★★

GENERALLY, rock journalists can't be mistaken for rock stars. Their writing can't fill stadiums, and they look decidedly less sexy than their subjects. But the rules don't apply to Nick Kent. Iggy Pop called the British writer "a great palsied mantis"; Lou Reed, "the Judy Garland of rock journalism." David Bowie grinned, "So you're Nick Kent? My, aren't you pretty!" Sid Vicious merely whipped him with a bicycle chain.

None of which would matter if Kent couldn't write. But the decades he's spent hanging out with bands like the Rolling Stones (sometimes seeming like a colony of Keith Richards) give his articles and interviews the authentic perspective of a sharply precise, insightful fly on the piss-stained wall of rock & roll.

As a 1970s staff writer for London's *New Musical Express*, Kent developed a specialty for writing about mainstream artists on the fringe, musicians who stared into the abyss. There are no interviews with Wings here. Instead we get Brian Wilson, the ruined king of surf. Keith Richards, a thin body full of dope. Lou Reed, a charmless, profane genius.

The rock world hasn't run out of train wrecks; this new edition contains recent writing on Axl Rose, Johnny Cash, Prince and Eminem, and older interviews, like Kent's late-1980s discussion with the Pogues' 200-proof leader, Shane MacGowan, who mumbles: "I don't take drugs to torture myself. I've already got life to do that for me!"

Kent gets to the heart of things. He waits patiently for Roky Erickson to recall where (and, indeed, who) he is, and he gets screamed at by a demented Jerry Lee Lewis. He coldly dissects the lonesome deaths of Sid and Nancy, their junk-filled bodies decomposing over hours rather than days, with a disgusted elegy, concluding: "Let them rot."

These are exciting, terrifying stories, avoiding rock & roll fun for grim fairy tales about lives going wrong. It's not all dark stuff — but the dark stuff is the best.

THE GIRLS' GUIDE TO ELVIS

By Kim Adelman

★★ *BROADWAY BOOKS, $13*

Elvis's favorite diet recipes? Elvis's favorite showgirls? Elvis's uncircumcised King? With the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hound Dog's death in full swing, here's one irreverent take — the giddy viewpoint of the squealing teenage girl. Kim Adelman's cheeky, annoying *Girls' Guide* (based on her obsessive-compulsive girls-guidetoelvis.com) transports us into the puerile mind of any fan curious about how Elvis avoided panty lines under that white jumpsuit. ("Elastic under-shorts" But of course.) Such silliness is a poor tribute; Adelman displays fanatic obsession without wit, insulting both the legend and girls of all ages. Still, celebrity predilections count as fair game for public discourse, and *Girls' Guide* delivers the tawdry goods.

MARCELLE KARP

GRAM PARSONS

GOD'S OWN SINGER

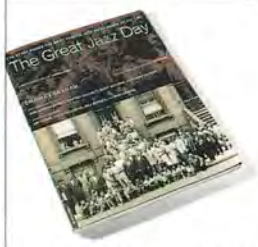
By Jason Walker

★★★

HELTER SKELTER PUBLISHING, $19

A 1973 morphine overdose killed Gram Parsons at 26, but during his brief life, the Flying Burrito Brothers' frontman led the Byrds and the Rolling Stones to country music — and after his death, inspired artists from the Eagles to Wilco. Jason Walker's encyclopedic *God's Own Singer* shadows Parsons from his affluent, troubled youth through his critically acclaimed, commercially unsuccessful career. Walker would have us see a tragic hero, but Parsons stumbles through these pages a coke-snorting ghost. *Singer* gives equal airtime to the salacious (a prolonged 1970 drug binge at Keith Richards's mansion) and the tedious (the mechanics of minor recording sessions), a barrage of trivia sure to smother latecomers.

JONAH WEINER



THE GREAT JAZZ DAY

By Charles Graham

★★★ *DA CAPO PRESS, $22.50*

One August morning in 1958, 57 jazz giants assembled outside a Harlem brownstone, and Art Kane photographed them for *Esquire* magazine. The shot would be the only occasion so many of them — from New Orleans traditionalist Red Allen to avant-garde post-bopper Sonny Rollins — would assemble (before 10 A.M., no less). *The Great Jazz Day* commemorates the image with extensive photographs and reminiscences. Dizzy Gillespie joked, "Here's my chance to see all these musicians without going to a funeral." Oddly, half of the book documents a 1961 photograph by Herb Snitzer of 22 jazz trumpeters blinking in Central Park sunlight — diminishing, slightly, the earlier Harlem "miracle."

BEN BRANDT

HIP-HOP IMMORTALS

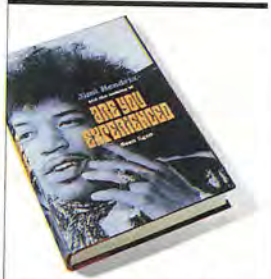
★★★ *IMMORTAL BRANDS/ SOCK BANDIT PRODUCTIONS, $72*

Hip-Hop Immortals is a hip-hop book in the purest sense: a loud, oversize photo collection

Robert Ellis/Reptofoto (Kent); Alphonse Telymonde (still-lifes, 8)

valuing visual image over thematic discipline — and practically begging readers to enjoy it over a spliff. Its art direction is a graphic designer's wet dream but a reader's nightmare, employing a kinetic layout that renders the text (by veteran hip-hop scribe Bonz Malone) almost literally illegible. And *Hip-Hop Immortals* ignores any chronology or thematic purpose, leaping on succeeding pages from West Coast battle MC (Xzibit) to Southern pioneers (OutKast) to Golden Age (Nice & Smooth). The book's colorful photography, by top lensmen including Nitin Vadukul, David LaChappelle and Mark Seliger, makes for great eye candy. Too bad the steep cover price puts this candy out of reach.

kris ex



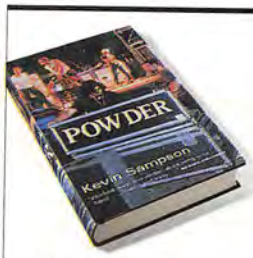
JIMI HENDRIX AND THE MAKING OF ARE YOU EXPERIENCED

By Sean Egan

✪✪✪ *A CAPPELLA, $15*

Delicious detail is the crucial ingredient in any "Making Of." Like this: One cold winter's day, Jimi Hendrix pleaded to his bassist Noel Redding's mom, in all innocence (and probably without the purred, priapic growl that would become famous), "Let me stand next to your fire." *Ding!* For its thirty-fifth anniversary, Sean Egan reveals Hendrix's debut album as a series of such spontaneous inspirations; except for "Hey Joe," the Experience (Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell) hadn't ever heard any of the songs before the day they recorded them. Egan offers a detailed rundown on Hendrix's London life and luminosity; as far as insights into the soul, the book's hero, having been unavailable for comment since 1970, remains its most shadowy figure.

PHIL SUTCLIFFE



POWDER

By Kevin Sampson

✪✪ *CANONGATE BOOKS, $15*

Although everyone from Elmore Leonard to Don DeLillo to Salman Rushdie has tried writing a rock novel, this subgenre remains one of the flimsiest in literature — largely because few "serious" authors have the slightest idea what rock stars are actually like in real life. That's not a problem for Kevin Sampson, whose *Powder*, about a Blur-like London group called the Grams, is studded with the kind of dead-on details you'd expect from the former manager of the early-'90s British rave-rock band the Farm. Sampson writes the occasional decent joke — in the book's funniest scene, the band's perennially coked-up guitarist mistakes R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe for the singer of REO Speedwagon — but his obsession with schedule minutiae (including a completely redundant two-page U.S. tour itinerary) and his complete lack of anything approaching well-rounded characterization makes readers long for a sharper storyteller.

CLARK COLLIS

S.T.P.
A JOURNEY THROUGH AMERICA WITH THE ROLLING STONES

By Robert Greenfield

✪✪✪ *DA CAPO PRESS, $16.50*

It's no coincidence that this fabled account of the 1972 S.T.P. (Stones Touring Party), first published in 1974, re-appears on the eve of yet another visit from Mick, Keith, et al. Despite its iconic status, *Journey* is problematic: Robert Greenfield's distracting style, rendering quotes in dialect ("Know what ai mean?") and using dated vernacular (all girlfriends are "ladies"), diminishes his unlimited access. But only just. From revels in the *Playboy* mansion in Chicago to a brief stint in a Rhode Island jail — resulting in a near-riot among the stoned Boston teens waiting for their heroes — *Journey* proves that 20 years of militarily precise Stones tours can't compare to the calamity Greenfield witnessed.

ROB KEMP

Blender Approved

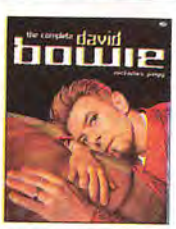
The pick of recent books

A LONG STRANGE TRIP

BY DENNIS McNALLY

BROADWAY

Hippies, hedonism and heroin: a history of the Grateful Dead's 30-year circus and the drug intake that shut it down.

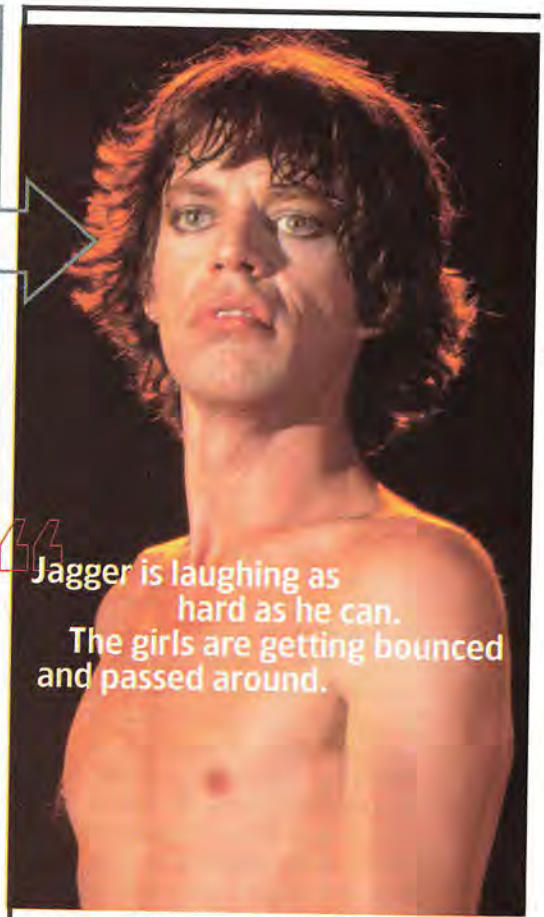


THE COMPLETE DAVID BOWIE

BY NICHOLAS PEGG

REYNOLDS & HEARN

From Aladdin to Ziggy. Every gig, B-side and persona of Bowie's career, including his new *Heathen*.



"Jagger is laughing as hard as he can. The girls are getting bounced and passed around.

The Best Part Of a Big Book!

On a plane in 1972, the Stones Touring Party invites three groupies to strip for an in-flight safety demo. . . .

EVERYONE COMES to the back of the plane to watch. Mick Taylor is playing bongos, Keith's shaking a tambourine, Jagger is wailing away. . . . Bill Wyman's young son happens to be on the flight and Bill's taken him to the front end of the aircraft and interested him in looking out the nearest window.

Although she's had only a whiskey sour, Renee feels like she's on acid. . . . Both Margo and Mary are completely naked by now. . . . They turn Mary upside down and start eating her . . . . Jagger is laughing as hard as he can. The girls are getting bounced and passed around. Two cameras are turning. Renee gets up to walk away. . . . "I didn't come for this," she says weakly, "I want to go up front." . . .

The S.T.P. guy helps Renee off with her clothes. She takes off his boots then gives him some head. . . . The plane comes skidding to a halt at the end of the runway and still the guy is going at it. Someone sticks a pass to the concert on her rear end. . . . When it's finally over, she slips into her top and her pants and carries her shoes down the stairway. Both Mick and [filmmaker] Robert [Frank] are out there filming her.

From S.T.P.: A Journey Through America With the Rolling Stones. *Copyright © 2002 by Robert Greenfield. Reprinted by arrangement with Da Capo Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group.*

al Preston/Corbis (Jagger)

Intergalactic planetary: ToeJam, Latisha and Earl show off their aggressive choices in footwear.

Go Funk Yourself!

Once again, P-Funk inspires its own video game — and it's da bomb! By Alex Porter

TOEJAM & EARL III: ALL FUNKED UP

SEGA — XBOX

✪✪✪✪

BLACK TO THE FUTURE!
They've got more soul than your average white heroes

SPAWN
A black, demonic (and dead) hired gun whups evil ass. Damn right.

BLADE II
Hunt the undead as a half-human, half-vampire, all-baaaad mothersucker.

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION
Storm's a sexy mutant sista — and she controls the *weather!* Owww!

SHADOWMAN II: THE SECOND COMING
Visit the voodoo underworld. Mess up some evil *mofos.* Aw, yeah.

>> EVERY HIP-HOP producer and his rival has already sampled and trampled Parliament/Funkadelic's righteous grooves to death. But it takes more than a little recording equipment to fully capture P-Funk's comic book–style, extraterrestrial-brother vibe.

For that, you need ToeJam & Earl III, a groovy game about two brothers (and a sista) from another planet. Your mission, as mandated by the intergalactic leader Funkapotamus, is to get on down to Earth and retrieve the 12 sacred Lost Albums of Funk.

Play as one of three soulful aliens on the freaky adventure: three-legged ToeJam, fat baritone Earl or saucy space sista Latisha. Collect keys and powerful treasures, like magic high-jumping sneakers, to help unlock new areas within *the game where the albums* are hidden. Dysfunktional earthlings — i.e., rhythm-challenged white folks, like a sadistic dentist and a super-psyched cheerleader — stand in your way. But a funkifying jolt from your radio temporarily transforms annoying enemies into Afroed homies.

Of course, ToeJam's all about the groove. Each recovered album adds a background track of original instrumental funk to the action. (Beware: ToeJam and Co.'s lightweight rap-video clips, playing between missions, will make you wanna splank your heroes with a bop gun and send 'em back to the mothership.)

While the frenetic, loose play can get redundant, a fairly funktastic mix of irreverent gags, kiddie-friendly design and colorful, colossal environments will keep fans of video-game innovation from gettin' up off *that thang for hours.*

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

ACTIVISION — XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE

Baywatch can't keep you in an endless summer? This gnarly barrel-riding game will be right up your pipeline. Surf Hawaii, Australia, Tahiti, Antarctica and a Japanese wave park, and pull lippers and switchbacks without getting sandy facials. Enough challenge to keep your board waxed for hours. Tubular, dude! ✪✪✪

TOXIC GRIND

THQ — XBOX, GAMECUBE

Yet another extreme-sports game. You're Jason Hayes, a poor bike star in the future who's forced to compete in a sadistic TV game show. Cheat gravity and death on nasty landscapes full of "orbs of death" and lasers. The problem: All the lethal swinging blades in videoland can't make the sluggish play in this pseudo X Games tribute move any quicker. ✪✪

HITMAN 2

EIDOS INTERACTIVE — XBOX, PS2, PC

You're a thinking assassin: a bald, genetically enhanced Sicilian, code-named 47. Don disguises, roam exotic locales and whack your victims with blazing submachine gun, stealthy crossbow or discreet chloroform. A dramatic score by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra gives the game a certain . . . *bada-bing!* ✪✪✪

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

NINTENDO — GAMECUBE

Another entry in the franchise. Mario, vacationing on a tropical isle, gets framed for vandalism. What's a poor little plumber to do? If you're Mario, jump and climb around giant, lovely 3D settings, avoiding piranha plants and deploying a water cannon to hose down balls of brown goop. Looks great, plays even better. ✪✪✪✪

Blender Approved

The pick of recent games

DEAD TO RIGHTS

NAMCO — XBOX

A rogue cop and his dog on a hard-boiled, trigger-happy mission to find the bastard who framed him. (The cop, not the dog, smart-ass.)

ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM

NINTENDO — GAMECUBE

A history-hopping horror epic featuring the "sanity meter," measuring how crackers you are. Pass the virtual Haldol!

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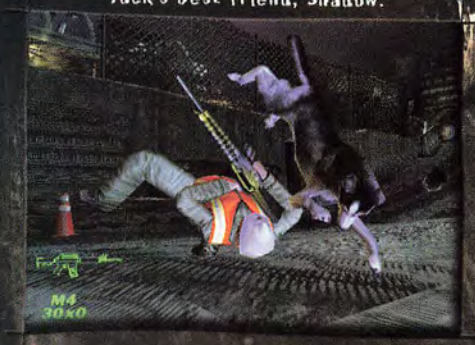
It's better to give than to receive.

Unlock 15 deadly disarm moves.

Use human shields. Fight hand to hand.

Take out goons or sniff out bombs with Jack's best friend, Shadow.



Nothing makes Jack Slate feel warmer inside than giving the gift of flying lead. But Jack will also take. With disarm moves that will take a weapon off a thug so fast it'll make his head spin. With such generosity, the coroner's gonna run out of gift wrap.

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Mature Sexual Themes
Violence

XBOX

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PENCIL ME IN!

No way? Way! It's *Blender*'s crossword! Starring 17 Down!

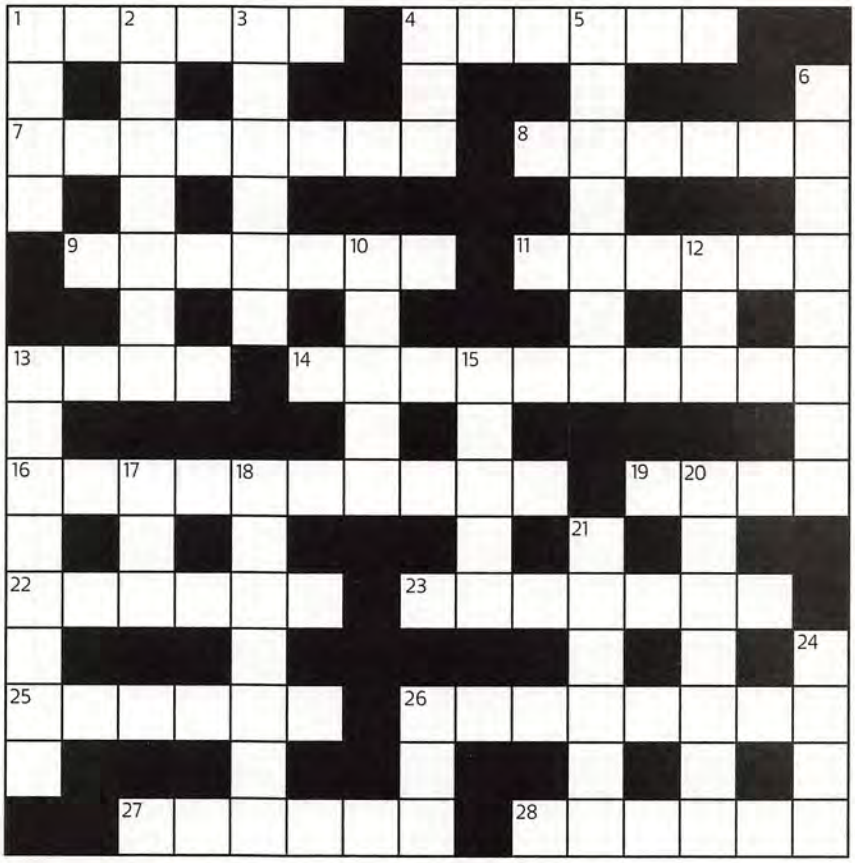
By Brendan Quigley

ACROSS

1 Oops . . . she plugged Pepsi again
4 Does he steal or merely sample? Only the Bad Boy knows (2 words)
7 Swedish rockers with album *Veni Vidi Vicious* (2 words)
8 ___ Tull, eighteenth-century agriculturalist (and 1970s rock gods with flutes)
9 "___ the Wind," a standard bequeathed to Bobby Womack and Elvis
11 Rapper who blasts critics: "It feels so empty without me!"
13 Instrumental surf-rock god Dick ___
14 Millions bought into her *Miseducation* (2 words)
16 All she wants to do is have some fun (2 words)
19 Bono, Adam, Larry and the ___
22 Eddy Grant rocked down to Electric ___
23 She duets with Ja Rule on "Always on Time"
25 R.E.M.'s colorful hit from 1988's *Green*, "___ Crush"
26 You can't deny it — this ghetto superstar is a lousy speller
27 The music ravers listen to
28 The Offspring are Mr. ___ Holland's opus

DOWN

1 Bands' live playlists
2 "___ Flame" — it's been a Bangles hit forever
3 A band member playing with Paul Revere
4 We play CDs on CD players and MP3s on ___
5 Aerosmith's 1976 classic and perennial prom fave (2 words)
6 Pamela shot a video with this ex-Crüe "member" (2 words)
10 "Shaft" singer ____ Hayes
12 Tom Petty: "___ won't back down" (2 words)
13 *Endtroducing* . . . Josh Davis's nom de turntable (2 words)
15 Alt-rap's Nappy ____
17 The only Ruff Ryder who wears a skirt
18 Old-school rapper who busted a move — to obscurity! (2 words)
20 Kiss honored this town as "Rock City"
21 Surname chosen for Joey, Dee Dee and their "brudders"
24 "You don't know how lucky you are, back in the ____"
26 Rock's Fighters, who departed Nirvana



OFFICE JAMZ! by David Rees

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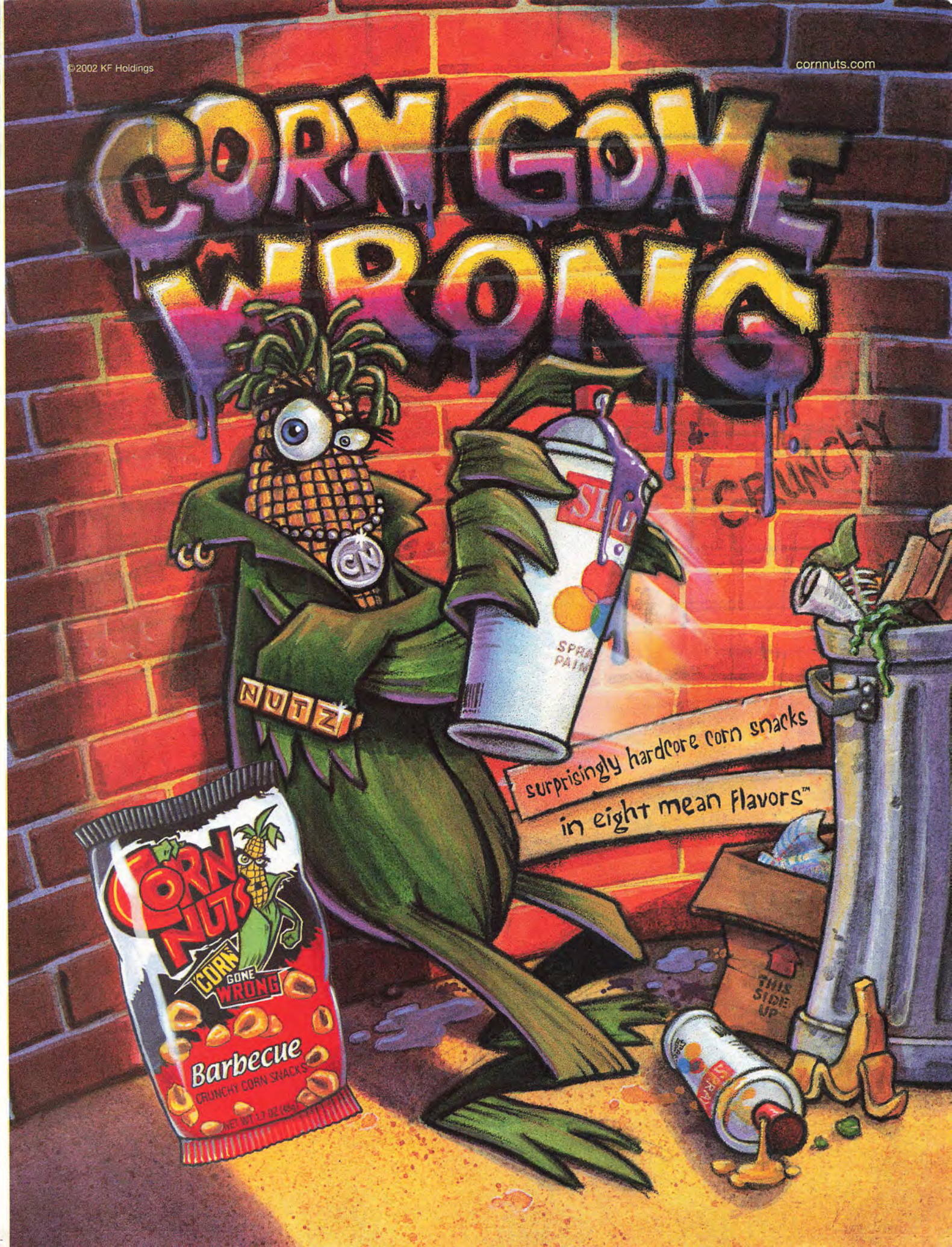

She's the whiskey-voiced 55-year-old icon of the 1960s who still "takes drugs occasionally," swears a lot, used to have sex with anyone who was nice to her and once saw a UFO. You can't blame for us for wondering . . .

WHO DOES MARIANNE FAITHFULL THINK SHE IS?

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE GARNER

What did you draw?
The only thing I can draw is an illustration of me and the mood I'm in, either happy or sad. Happy's how I feel at the moment.

How come?
My work is going well. My family are well. It's a new century. I just sort of got over everything.

Is there another era you fantasize about living in?
The eighteenth century would have suited me well. They had a more sound view of sex and fun. I'd have to be titled and very rich, obviously — the eighteenth century was no fun if you were poor. And I would have to bend convention much more: Even then, you had to be married in order to have affairs.

How would you describe your taste in sex?
Very straightforward. When I was younger, I thought I had to have sex with everybody who was nice to me. That lasted about 20 years.

Were people often nice to you?
Yeah. Anyone who was kind, I would have sex with. I've never cared about their looks — having been quite beautiful myself, I'm very interested in anti-beauty.

What do people who don't like you say about you?
They say I can't sing. I've got a weird voice; I know that. There was talk of making my autobiography [1995's *Faithfull*] into a film, and the whole script was about my life — absolutely nothing about my music, which I find incredibly offensive. So fuck 'em. [*Laughs*] That's a million dollars I won't be making.

What's your favorite curse word?
Fucking cunt. How British! We don't really say *asshole,* so *fucking cunt* is the most extreme expression of displeasure. And I use it a lot! I might have a margarita. Would you like one?

Yes, please, with salt. Did you have a nickname at school?
"Faithless." That was a funny name, because it's completely the opposite: I'm very faithful to myself. I obviously have an enormous ego. My opinions are relentlessly tough and defiant. People find that difficult from a woman.

Who were you last mistaken for?
I have this Theory of Multiple Blondes. In the '60s, there were all these blondes: Sylvia Miles, me, Nico, Anita Pallenberg, Sarah Miles, Jane Fonda. There've been times when somebody else has fallen down drunk at a party in New York, and people thought it was me — but I was safe and sound at home.

Have you ever seen a UFO?
[*Nods yes*] I mean, it may have just been the drugs, but I didn't take that much acid. I was very lucky: I never went overboard with drugs. People are always saying to me, "You know, you should really be dead." They can be quite annoyed that I'm not!

Well, you *did* take drugs —
I still take drugs occasionally! I smoke a spliff and have the odd mushroom or line of coke. Every year, it gets more clear that I haven't really paid.

Plus, you smoke cigarettes.
I guess when I'm ill and I really feel it, I'll stop. [*Lifts her margarita*] Cheers. [BLENDER]

"People always say to me, 'You know, you should really be dead.'"

Wardrobe styling: Lisa Michelle for Luxe; hair: William Williams; makeup: Hiromi Ando for Artmix (L.A.)

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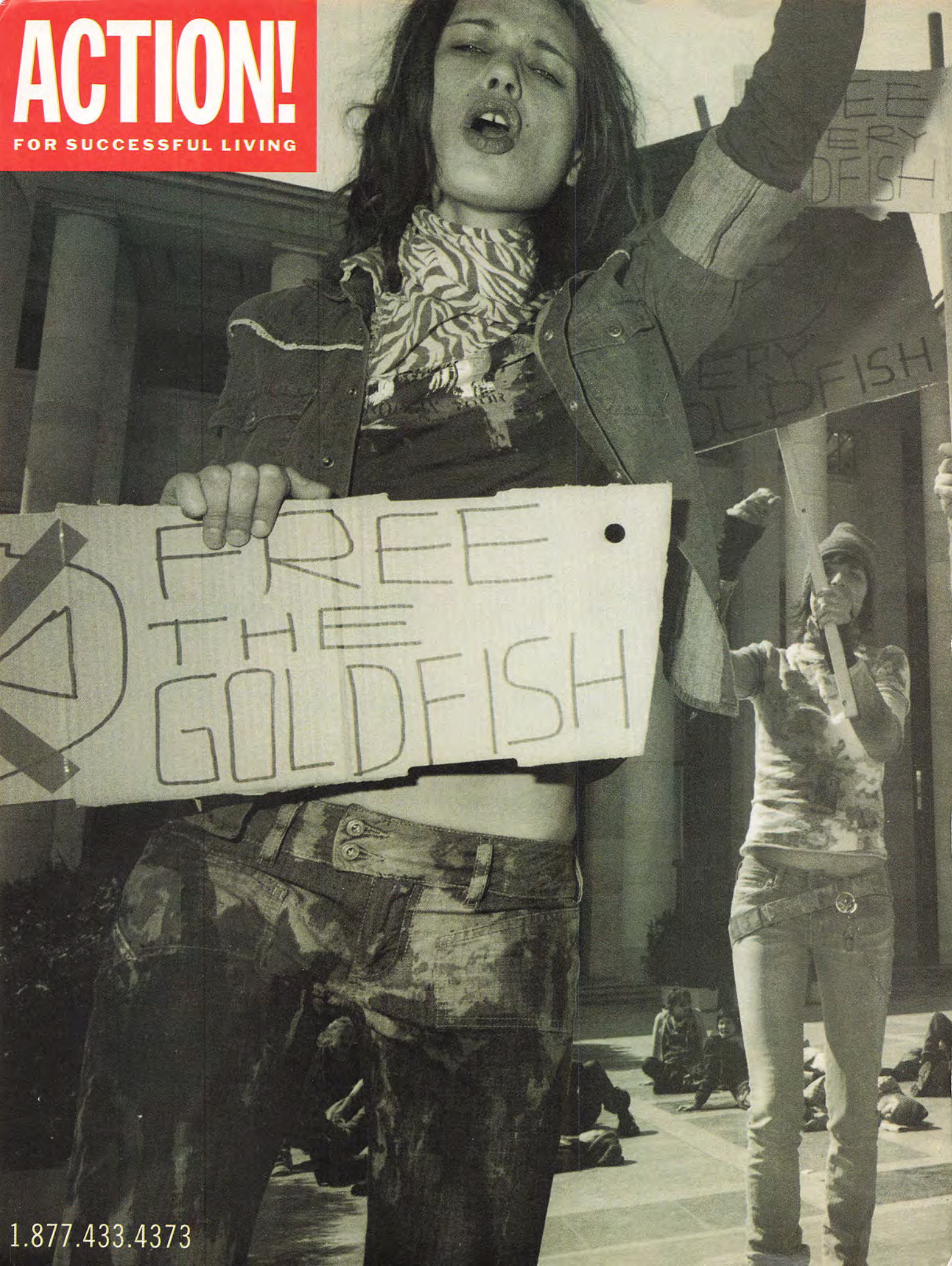

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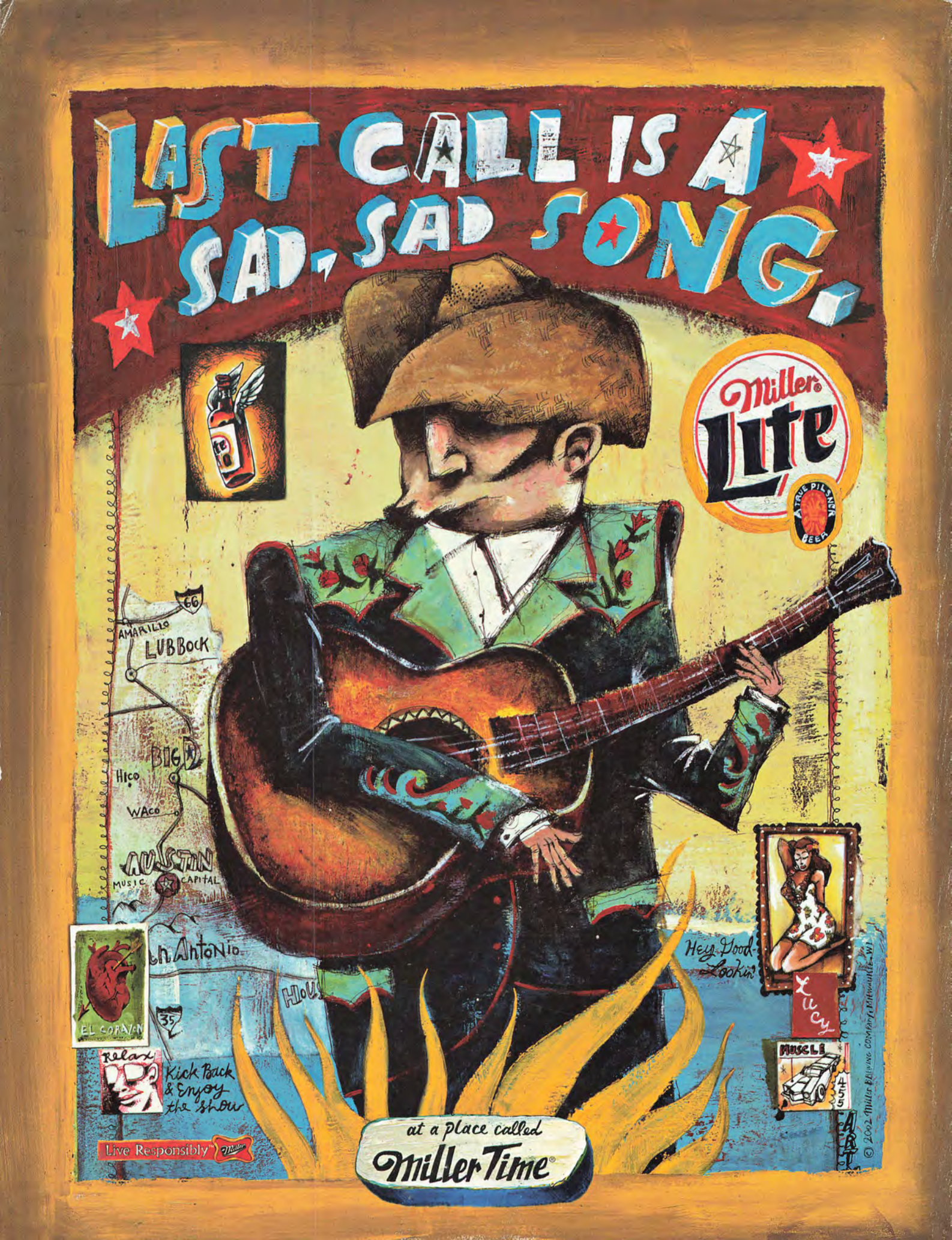
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